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Focus: Tributes to Andrew Walls and
Benedict Ssettuuma (Uganda); Samuel
T. O. Akande (Nigeria)



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The *Journal of African Christian Biography* was launched in 2016 to complement and make stories from the online *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org) more readily accessible and immediately useful in African congregations and classrooms.

Now published quarterly, with all issues available online, the intent of the *JACB* is to promote the research, publication, and use of African Christian biography within Africa by serving as an academically credible but publicly accessible source of information on Christianity across the continent. Content will include biographies already available on the website itself, but original contributions related to African Christian biography or to African church history are also welcome. While the policy of the DACB itself has been to restrict biographical content to subjects who are deceased, the *JACB* plans to include interviews with select living African church leaders and academics.

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Table of Contents

Introduction: A time to mourn and a time to dance By Michèle Miller Sigg, Editor.....	1
Andrew Walls: Mentor, Friend, Exemplar By Jonathan Bonk DACB Founding Director Emeritus	3
Andrew Walls: A Quintessential and Dedicated Scholar of African Church History By Harvey Kwiyani and Deji Ayegboyin	22
Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Benedict Binta-Akiiki Ssettuuma (1967-2021) of Uganda: A Great Loss among Young Generations of African Theologians By Francis Anekwe Oborji.....	39
DACB Author Spotlight: Dr. Michael Adeleke Ogunewu	44
Akande, Samuel Titilola Oladele.....	45
<i>African Christian Biography</i> Serialized: Jan Tzatzoe or Dyani Tshatshu: Personal, Political, and Historical Consequences of Naming in African History By Roger S. Levine.....	56
Teaching with the DACB: Reflections of a Student	67
Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa Compiled by Beth Restricks, Head, BU African Studies Library	74

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Andrew Walls photo courtesy of James Krabill, Facebook.

Introduction: A time to mourn and a time to dance

By Michèle Miller Sigg, Editor

For everything there is a season, (...)

A time to be born, and a time to die (...)

A time to weep and a time to laugh

A time to mourn and a time to dance.

(Ecclesiastes 3: 1a, 2a, 4).

Since January 2019, in five out of twelve issues, the *Journal of African Christian Biography* has paid tribute to major figures of African Christianity, recently deceased: Lamin Sanneh (Gambia/US, Catholic, 1942-2019) in the April 2019 issue, John Mbiti (Kenya, Anglican, 1931-2019) in the January 2020 issue, John Samuel Pobee (Ghana, Anglican, 1937-2020) in the April 2020 issue, Charles Nyamiti (Tanzania/Kenya, Catholic, 1931-2020) in the July 2020 issue, and now, in the October 2021 issue, Benedict Ssettuuma, Jr. (Uganda, Catholic, 1967-2021) and Andrew Finlay Walls (Ghana/UK/All Africa, Methodist, 1928-2021). The disappearance of so many giants of African Christianity—pioneers who carved out a space for Africa in the gated realm of Christian history and theology—seems to have accelerated since the deaths of Kwame Bediako (Ghana, Presbyterian, 1945-2008) and Ogbu Uke Kalu (Nigeria, Presbyterian, 1943-2009) in 2008 and 2009. Lastly, the loss of Andrew Walls, “Prof.” and mentor to many scholars who preceded him in death, crowns the passing of a generation that laid the foundations for the academic study of African Christianity.

This issue of the Journal honors the memory of Andrew Walls (1928-2021) and Benedict Ssettuuma, Jr. (1967-2021). First, Jonathan Bonk, DACB Founding Director Emeritus, describes Walls’ widespread influence by referencing quotes from many of Walls’ former students, friends, and colleagues. The *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* is one of the many projects that he inspired. Second, Deji Ayegboyin and Harvey Kwiyani describe the ways Walls prophetically called for recognition of Africa’s emerging importance in Global Christianity. Next, Francis Anekwe Oborji pays tribute to former student Benedict Ssettuuma, Jr., a prolific theologian and writer who also contributed many biographies to the DACB.

The next article recognizes the extensive work of Michael Adeleke Ogunewu who, over many years, faithfully recorded the lives and ministries of many figures of Nigerian Christianity. His most recently revised biography of Samuel Titilola Oladele Akande is showcased here and [online](#). Continuing the serialization of *African Christian Biography: Stories, Lives, and Challenges* (Cluster, 2018), this issue includes Roger Levine’s reflections on Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu of the Xhosa People of South Africa and the historian’s challenges in naming. Finally, as the first of a series on “Teaching with the DACB,” a Boston University student reflects on what she learned during her semester as a student researcher for the DACB.

As the writer of Ecclesiastes famously reminds us, the flow of our lives moves from birth to death, from joy to sadness. This is a self-evident truth. And yet, in the lines that follow, the writer reverses the experience of joy and sadness: weeping is followed by laughter and mourning by dancing. We can be grateful to the pioneers who have gone before us, among whom are Andrew Walls and Benedict Ssettuuma, Jr., great men of faith, even as we grieve their loss. Even in death, they give us hope. They invite us to move from mourning to dancing because they have left the world a better place.

I have deep sorrow that Andrew is gone, wonderful memories, and the knowledge that the world is a better place because he lived in it.
“Changed from glory into glory.”

Dana Lee Robert, DACB Executive Committee¹

¹ Tributes from online and emails, published in Brian Stanley, “Andrew Finlay Walls (1928-2021),” *International Bulletin of Mission Research* (October 2021).

Andrew Walls: Mentor, Friend, Exemplar

By Jonathan Bonk

DACB Founding Director Emeritus

Just who was Andrew Walls?² In the words of his hometown journalist Lindsay Bruce of the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, Andrew Walls was “the world-famous Aberdeen ‘prof you’ve likely never heard of.”³ Bruce goes on to outline his life as a student, as an RAF officer, as a professor, as an effective city counselor and as an active force within the arts community (for which he received an OBE in 1978). His details include an Oxford scholarship, a stint in the RAF during national service, active duty on the Methodist circuit in North of Scotland, and a lifetime of scholarly engagement in African Christian history and theology.

When I think of Andrew, like so many of you who know him and are reading this article, I hardly know where to begin. Following two years of graduate studies in mission at a well-known Chicago seminary from 1970-1972—during which I do not recall ever hearing mention of the man who would become such a powerfully positive influence in my life—I came to a fork in my academic road: library science or African studies.

Opting for African Studies at Northwestern University, a faculty colleague (historian) urged me to explore possible options at the University of Aberdeen with someone named Andrew Walls. Until then I had heard of neither the university nor the man. But because my interests lay largely in the field of mission history, I wrote a letter to Prof. Andrew Walls, outlining my interests. I had already received highly formalized, positive but impersonal responses from the university. From Professor Andrew Walls, on the other hand, I received a

² I would encourage readers of this article to contact the moderator of the Yale-Edinburgh Group on World Christianity and the History of Mission for the string of reminiscences, tributes and accolades that were offered by group members when Andrew Walls passed away in Aberdeen on August 12, 2021 at the age of 93.

³ “Andrew Walls: the impacting life of the world famous Aberdeen ‘prof you’ve likely never heard of,” *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, September 13, 2021 (<https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/education/higher-education/3464843/andrew-walls-the-impacting-life-of-the-world-famous-aberdeen-prof-youve-likely-never-heard-of/>).

handwritten letter several pages long addressing my particular interests and inviting me to come to Aberdeen.

By then I had tracked down some of his remarkable essays—literary and historical jewels appearing here and there in what for me were obscure journals and magazines—and had familiarized myself with Andrew's Department of Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen. A personal handwritten invitation from someone who was clearly an outstanding academic able to attract an entire roster of professors to join his department gave me an early insight into the man and became a compelling reason for our family to relocate to Aberdeen in 1978. There I got to know Andrew and some of his colleagues—especially Adrian Hastings, Harold Turner, James Thrower, Lamin Sanneh, and Jocelyn Murray—with Roy Bridges and John Hargraves ready to hand.

I also got to know Andrew as “Finley Anderson,” who would host a bi-weekly “Lunchbreak at the Art Gallery,” staging of dramatic readings and recitations from Scottish literature (especially Grampian), with complimentary instrumental or vocal performances. Those were among the most intellectually and spiritually formative years in my life and set me on the course that is now drawing to a close. Professor Walls was not only present but was intimately involved in conceiving, launching, and implementing the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* (www.DACB.org), aiding with the creation of a vast network of individuals and institutions across the continent of Africa who joined the initiative, and always offering words of encouragement, advice and affirmation.

It was well known that he found it difficult to answer personal questions, no matter how rudimentary, with a simple “yes” or “no” or “I’m just fine.” Professor Rosalind Hackett who was my contemporary as Prof. Walls’ student related that when she once asked him how he and Doreen were doing, he responded that between them they had a set of working parts!⁴

When I joined OMSC in 1997, it was only after Andrew encouraged me that I mustered enough confidence to accept Gerald Anderson’s invitation to become a part of that community. I can only echo my deep appreciation for Andrew’s personal qualities mentioned by so many—including readers of this journal—in the Yale-Edinburgh Group posts following news of his departure. A more extensive summary of his many contributions can be found in the festschrift

⁴ In an email to me dated August 29, 2021. Professor Hackett is Chancellor’s Professor Emerita, Professor Emerita, Department of Religious Studies at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. She is also Extraordinary Professor at the Desmond Tutu Centre for Religion and Social Justice, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

in his honor edited by William R. Burrows, Mark R. Gornik, and Janice A. Mclean, *Understanding World Christianity: The Vision and Work of Andrew F. Walls* (Orbis 2011). My own modest contribution to this volume appeared as the chapter, “Changing the Course of Mission and World Mission and World Christian Studies: Andrew Walls and the Streetlight Effect” (pp, 61-77).⁵

The invitation to contribute to the festschrift (on which this article is based) honoring Prof. Walls arrived on August 5, 2008. The instructions stipulated that the essay should overview “ways in which Andrew Walls has helped to redefine the field of mission studies and world Christian studies.” A measure of his influence may be deduced from the audacity of the assignment itself. Is there anyone else, still alive, whose influence would elicit let alone warrant such a request? On October 22, 2010, a simple Google search of “Andrew Walls” yielded 1,580,000 results in less than one second.

Thanks to Walls, *mission* and *world Christianity* are of a piece. They can no longer be seen as discretely autonomous entities. The missionary movement from the West is one episode in the much grander drama of world Christianity. And it is not the central act. Those whose scholarship and outlook unabashedly reflect his influence include former students, missionaries, church leaders, missiologists, and historians who have come under the spell of his lectures and published essays. Among these—who by no means represent any historiographic mainstream (even if there were such a thing)—his impact has been quietly, steadily, and profoundly revolutionary. This essay, it will soon be clear, is not so much an academic assessment as it is a synopsis of opinions and observations by several dozen well-known academics in the field whose advice I solicited before setting out to write this short tribute.⁶

The Influence of His Ideas. If Walls is notorious for his modesty, his devotees—including former students, professorial colleagues, and academic peers—tend to be effusive in their admiration of the man. For some, their encounter with Walls

⁵ This article relies heavily on that chapter and is here used with the permission of the publisher.

⁶ Having accepted the invitation to contribute an essay to the festschrift, on September 4, 2008, I wrote to approximately one hundred academics whose research, writing, and teaching intersect with the study of mission and world Christianity. These include members of the Yale-Edinburgh Group for the Study of Missions and World Christianity as well as his former colleagues, collaborators, publishers, and students. Where I quote directly from their remarks, I so indicate.

is expressed in terms ordinarily reserved for religious conversion. He was their academic epiphany.

“Andrew turned my life around,” recalled Frederick Norris. “When I met Andrew at OMSC,” he wrote,

I had been a history of theology major for eleven years and four degrees, including the Yale Ph.D. I had taught historical theology, theology, and ethics in all eras for five years in a provincial seminary. He made everything I had studied new: some things turned upside down, others related to events, persons, and writings I had not considered. *Never had I seen such insight into the nature and history of the Gospel, culture, and the church.* I stopped the project I was working on and turned to the history of World Christianity.⁷

“Andrew Walls,” observed Philip Jenkins, “is a much maligned man. Everyone accuses him of just being a brilliant scholar on African Christianities in the modern world.... I still think the ideas expressed very briefly in his essay ‘Eusebius tries again’ should be enough to keep any decent history department on their toes for several years.”⁸

In an interview about his book *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith* (InterVarsity 2009), historian Mark Noll acknowledged the transformative role played by Andrew Walls in his own thinking: “The missiologist Andrew Walls has written profoundly about the huge impact of voluntary societies on world Christianity” he said. “*My book is, in a sense, only an extended footnote on Walls’ very important insights* (italics mine).” Noll then went on to urge readers of his book to familiarize themselves with Walls’ *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Orbis 1996).⁹

⁷ Frederick W. Norris in a personal email to Jonathan Bonk, dated September 11, 2008. Norris attributes his own *Christianity: A Short Global History* (Oneworld Publications, 2002) to the influence of Andrew Walls.

⁸ Philip Jenkins to Jonathan Bonk, in a personal email September 5, 2008, referring to Andrew F. Walls, “Eusebius Tries Again: Reconceiving the Study of Christian History,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (July 2000), pp. 105–111.

⁹Justin Taylor, “An Interview with Mark Noll about *The New Shape of World Christianity*” first appearing in *Faith, Books and Culture* (June 8, 2009), <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2009/06/08/interview-with-mark-noll-about-new/>, accessed August 30, 2010.

Daniel Bays [1942-2019], in his time a leading academic interpreter of Christianity in China, recalled being “struck by the freshness of his approach and the cogency of his case for the need to re-conceptualize both Western and non-Western Christianity” the first time he heard Walls lecture some twenty-five years earlier:

In the years since then my own approach to issues in the history of Christianity in China has been heavily influenced by his insights.... For years now, I have been employing concepts coined by him as tools to enhance my own understanding of the historical dynamics of Christianity in the global East and South, and as examples of creative historical thinking. Andrew has almost single-handedly transformed the moribund field of “mission studies” or “missiology” into a lively arena of Christianity’s interface with culture and cross-cultural transmission of faith.¹⁰

One would be hard pressed to write a credible history of world Christianity today without using ideas, themes, and orientations traceable to Walls. His ability to see connections, analogies, and hitherto overlooked links across the spectra of time, ideas, practices, and places has often re-energized and even re-directed serious historians. Scottish historian David Bebbington referred to Walls as “the leading pioneer of his generation in writing the academic history of Christian missions. His writing,” he went on to say, “depicts the modern missionary movement as a phase in the grand sweep of global Christian history and he has illuminated with particular clarity the relationship between the Christian faith and its host culture.”¹¹ In the words of evangelical historian Mark Noll,

no one has written with greater wisdom about what it means for the Western Christian religion to become the global Christian religion (...). By tracing the current movement of Christianity from the post-Enlightenment North to the animistic South, Walls [shows] how much the twentieth century has resembled the second century,

¹⁰ Daniel H. Bays in a personal email to Jonathan Bonk dated September 26, 2008. Bays’ best known book is *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford 1996). Bays was Professor and History Director in the Asian Studies Program at Calvin College. His latest book, co-edited with Ellen Widmer, is *China’s Christian Colleges: Cross-Cultural Connections, 1900-1950* (Stanford 2009).

¹¹ David W. Bebbington to Jonathan Bonk, in a personal email dated September 4, 2008.

when Christianity moved out from its Judaic origins into the Hellenistic Mediterranean, and also its seventh-and-eighth century of northward migration from that Greco-Roman world into the Germanic regions of Europe.¹²

The venerable Robert Frykenberg, pre-eminent Indian historian and professor emeritus of Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin, frankly acknowledged the influence of Walls on his thinking dating from their first encounter at a conference in 1986:

The sheer breadth and depth and mind-expanding sweep of [his] ideas, as these have helped me to reformulate my own perspectives on Christian Missions and World Christianity, have been breathtaking. (...) Indeed, his ideas enabled perspectives on the growth of Christianity in India, from its earliest beginnings to the present, that would not have been otherwise possible. For this alone I owe him a huge debt of gratitude.¹³

Commenting on David Barrett's prescient conjecture in 1970 that the growth surge in African Christianity portended that "African Christians might well tip the balance and transform Christianity permanently into a primarily non-Western religion," the late Kwame Bediako pointed out that it was Andrew Walls who realized that "what happens within the African Churches in the next generation will determine the whole shape of church history for centuries to come; what sort of theology is most characteristic of the Christianity of the twenty-first century may well depend on what has happened in the minds of African Christians in the interim."¹⁴

¹² Mark. A. Noll, "Andrew F. Walls: The Missionary Movement in Christian History (1996)" in *First Things* (March 2000), pp. 55-56.

¹³ Robert Eric Frykenberg in a personal email to Jonathan Bonk, September 24, 2008. Frykenberg's most recent book is his highly acclaimed *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford 2010).

¹⁴ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Edinburgh University Press and Orbis Books, 1995), p. viii, citing David B. Barrett, "AD 2000: 350 million Christians in Africa", *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 59, No 233 (January 1970), pp. 39-54, and A. F. Walls, "Toward An Understanding of Africa's Place in Christian History", in J. S. Pobee (ed.), *Religion in a Pluralistic Society* (E. J. Brill, 1976), pp. 180-189.

Alan Kreider, a prominent academic in Anabaptist circles with special expertise in Christendom's origins and subsequent impact upon world Christianity,¹⁵ acknowledged that Walls

has helped the world church to teach me, and I would suspect, many others, not least by continuing, learnedly but lightly, to make connections with the area of his own expertise—patristics. The dialogue between the new churches of the early centuries A.D. and the new churches of today is transformative. It has altered the way I understand and teach the early church; it has also given my students new perspectives on the ways that we can view the churches worldwide today. (...) A “new Eusebius,” [his] awareness of the people of God across space and the centuries has both depth and breadth. His unerring eye for the tell-tale person or incident has provided specifics which have enabled me to see the huge movements of accession and recession across the centuries. (...) I have found his vision of the various forms that Christianity has taken in many settings historically and today to be both humorous and liberating.¹⁶

Similar stories have been recounted with such frequency on all five continents that it was not only appropriate but inevitable that the American Society of Church History should have honored him with its Distinguished Career Award in January 2007, in recognition of his impact on the field.[note?]

Research and Documentation. The key role played by Walls in encouraging and stimulating the collection and preservation of often overlooked materials that retrospectively turn out to be indispensable to the collective memory known as “Church History” cannot be overestimated. In an article appearing in the July/August 2010 issue of *Discover Magazine*, David Freedman examined the impact of what scientists refer to as “The Streetlight Effect” on medical and scientific theory and practice:

Researchers tend to look for answers where the looking is good, rather than where the answers are likely to be hiding, just like the old drunk who was found on his hands and knees crawling around under a streetlight. Asked by a policeman what he was doing, he said

¹⁵ See, for example, his edited volume, *The Origins of Christendom in the West* (T & T Clark, 2001).

¹⁶ Alan Kreider in a personal email to Jonathan Bonk, September 25, 2008.

that he was looking for his keys. “Are you sure this is where you lost them,” the policeman asked? “I lost them on the other side of the street,” the man replied. “Then why are you looking for them here?” queried the puzzled officer. “Because,” responded the man impatiently, “the light is better here. There is a streetlight.”¹⁷

The streetlight effect has its analogue in the study of church history. Researching outside the beam of the streetlight—where Christianity is growing most rapidly and where theologies are proliferating as the Bible is brought to bear on questions and issues never anticipated by either its authors or its emissaries—is tedious, time consuming, and sometimes frustrating, so scholars go to the places where the streetlights shine: university and mission libraries, archives and materials in Western lands. There is, of course, nothing wrong with such histories, except that they no longer tell the story of the world church. Key elements of that story can only be found elsewhere, beyond the reassuring beam of the streetlight. And it is there that Walls has pioneered in both the search itself, in the documentation and interpretation of what is discovered, and in the creation of tools essential to the preservation of the record.

At the inaugural meeting of the International Association for Mission Studies (IAMS) in 1972, Walls initiated The Documentation, Archives, and Bibliography (DAB, now DABOH, with the additional acronym for Oral History) Mission Study Group. Gerald Anderson, a contemporary, collaborator and close friend of Walls, hailed him as “one of the Founding Fathers of IAMS, along with Myklebust, Gensichen, Arnulf Camps, S. J. Samartha, and Paul R. Clifford.” Anderson went on to recall that “In the pre-history of (...) the founding of IAMS in 1972 at Driebergen (...) [Walls] was at the important consultation in 1968 at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham (...) [although] he was not at the two preliminary meetings held in Hamburg in 1955 and 1966, because he was in Africa and returned to Scotland only in 1966 to teach at Aberdeen.”¹⁸

In personal notes made at the follow-up conference in Oslo in 1970, Anderson recorded that

¹⁷ David H. Freedman, “The Streetlight Effect,” *Discover Magazine* (July / August 2010), pp. 55–57.

¹⁸ In a personal email to me on October 21, 2010, Anderson recalled that when Prof. Myklebust retired and stepped down from his position as General Secretary and Treasurer of IAMS at the conference in Frankfurt in 1974, Andrew was elected as the second General Secretary [a separate person was elected as Treasurer] of the Association, in which office he served until 1976.

Andrew Walls reported in the business meeting that a group of participants had met to discuss concerns about bibliographical, documentation, and information services. They concluded that there was a need for more information about existing resources and services and requested the Provisional Committee to sponsor a questionnaire to this end, “and that future conferences should provide for news and discussion of documentation and other instruments studiorum for mission studies.” This was the beginning of what would become a major continuing project and initiative of IAMS, known as DAB or DABOH.” DABOH: “Documentation, Archives, Bibliography and Oral History.”¹⁹

Walls continued to be an animating influence in meetings and projects undertaken by the DAB/DABOH until the end of his life. He played a leading role, for example, in the DAB consultation on “Mission Studies and Information Management” held in Rome in 1980, and in a subsequent DABOH consultation held in Rome in 2002 on the theme “Rescuing the Memory of Our Peoples.” Among the tangible fruits of the 2002 consultation was a sixty-page “how to” archives manual compiled by Martha Smalley and Rosemary Seton. This widely used resource became freely available online as a PDF in seven languages.²⁰

More than most, Walls understood that “A people is defined and unified not by blood but by shared memory. (...) Deciding to remember, and

¹⁹ Ibid. “DABOH,” according to its official Web site, “exists to help rescue the memory of our people by: promoting the documentation (with due emphasis on recording personal memoirs through oral history and other means) of the mission of the Christian church around the world, especially in regions where infrastructures do not exist for such endeavours; (2) encouraging the support, development and use of archives for mission; (3) stimulating the preparation and distribution of material to enable mission studies and other researchers to identify, locate and access primary material on the mission of the church in their own country and worldwide; and (4) networking with individuals and groups with related concerns, and facilitating multilateral, ecumenical, inter-cultural and international conversation to further our understanding of worldwide Christianity. [<http://missionstudies.org/index.php/study-groups/daboh/> (accessed October 15, 2010)].

²⁰ *Rescuing the Memory of our Peoples: Archive Manual* (IAMS and OMSC, 2003) is available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Swahili, and Chinese. It can be downloaded at <https://dacb.org/resources/introductory/> (“Introductory Resources”-- #3 on the DACB Website) or at <http://www.library.yale.edu/div/RTMmanuallinks.html> (Enter “Rescuing the Memory of our Peoples” in the search box of the Yale Divinity School library website).

what to remember, is how we decide who we are.”²¹ And for decades he has acted practically, resourcefully, and without fanfare on that conviction. He was widely known for his work as editor of the long running “Bibliography on Mission Studies” series that has been a regular feature of the *International Review of Mission* since 1982.²²

Less conspicuous but possibly of greater ultimate significance were his efforts to stimulate local documentation and collections. Where others saw junk mail, he saw the treasures of social history. So common as to escape scholarly notice at the time, such humble non-academic materials become indispensable to a future generation’s understanding of their ancestors. His eye for the important but generally overlooked category sometimes known as “gray literature” was evident in the voluminous but quirky collection of pamphlets, booklets, letters, flyers, tracts, printed memorabilia, and miscellanea that he accumulated over the years, and to which he would refer his students at Aberdeen and Edinburgh universities, at the Akrofi-Christaller Centre in Akropong, and at Hope University in Liverpool. He instilled in his students and inspired in his peers an appreciation for non-scholarly printed materials. It is only with the passage of time that such materials come to be appreciated as a clear window—unobscured by scholarly processing—into the world as seen, experienced and articulated by those who lived and moved in earlier times.

Robert Schuster, director of the Billy Graham Center Archives at Wheaton, expressed his indebtedness to Walls

for his contributions, over more than a quarter of a century, to the task of ensuring that the record of Christ’s church be preserved for the church as well as scholars and the general community. He has always stressed the need for the documents to be used as well as saved, and for the historical resources to be as easily available in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as in Europe and North America.²³

²¹ Robert Pinsky, “Poetry and American Memory,” *The Atlantic Online* (October 1999), URL: <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/99oct/9910pinsky.htm> Accessed October 21, 2010.

²² The title of this long-running series has evolved over time, beginning in January of 1982 as “Bibliography on World Mission and Evangelism,” continuing until October 1987 as “Bibliography on World Mission,” until finally settling on “Bibliography on Mission Studies” in January 1988. Margaret M. Acton has served as co-editor of the bibliography since April 1996.

²³ Robert Schuster in a personal email to Jonathan Bonk, September 18, 2008.

While on leave from St. Andrew's College in Kabare, Kenya in 1988, Bishop Graham Kings recalled meeting Walls in Cambridge, where he was giving the Henry Martyn Lectures:

The importance he gave to (...) church archives in Nigeria was highlighted when he told me that the ones he had collected were destroyed in the Biafran war. This was the inspiration behind founding an archive centre at St. Andrew's College (...) which was opened in November 1992 and has the archives of Archbishop David Gitari and the Diocese of Mount Kenya East and a collection of material culture. Later on, his encouragement led to the founding of the Henry Martyn Centre for the study of mission and world Christianity in Cambridge in 1966, and our collaboration on the North Atlantic Missiology Project, led by Brian Stanley.”²⁴

He also figured significantly in facilitating Harold W. Turner's [his old friend from their Nigeria and Sierra Leone days] New Religious Movements collections when they were colleagues at the University of Aberdeen. It was as a colleague of Walls that Turner published his remarkable six-volume *Bibliography of New Religious Movements in Primal Societies* (G. K. Hall 1977–1992).²⁵ Walls did not see these movements as ephemeral desiderata on the margins of some timelessly “normative” European Christian map. Rather, they were and are a crucial “older testament”, indispensable to an understanding of the massive demographic shift taking place in world Christianity. It was these primal religions that made widespread appropriation of Christian faith across Asia, Latin America, Macronesia, and Africa over the past century possible, perhaps even inevitable. Andrew Walls grasped their significance decades before most of his peers. In an interview in 2007, Lamin Sanneh [1942–2019]—an early colleague of Walls at

²⁴ Canon Dr. Graham Kings, Vicar of Islington, in a personal email to Jonathan Bonk, September 26, 2008. Dr. Graham Kings was appointed Bishop of Sherborne in Dorset in April 2009.

²⁵ The Turner Collection is now a part of the Research Unit for New Religions and Cultures at the University of Birmingham. According to the Web site, “The collection is a record of Harold Turner's research into the phenomenon of new religious movements arising out of the interaction between traditional cultures and religions with biblical teaching, and with other religions on all continents, including Asia. The origin and emphasis of the documentation has been whether this phenomenon is wide-spread and how the proliferation of these movements raised important pastoral and theological issues for Christian mission.” The collection consists of some 28,000 items.

the University of Aberdeen—noted that he was “one of the few scholars who say that African Christianity was not just an exotic, curious phenomenon in an obscure part of the world, but that African Christianity might be the shape of things to come.”²⁶

In my own case, the Ida Grace McRuer Mission Resource Centre collection at Providence College and Theological Seminary and later transferred to the University of Edinburgh was a direct result of Walls’ pamphlet collection in Aberdeen. Neither mandated nor oriented to research, this non-denominational school in southern Manitoba became home to a collection of prayer letters and booklets, bulletins, in-house promotional materials and publications, pamphlets, etc. from some fourteen hundred North American mission societies—both independent and denominational. The collection grew until it filled five rooms and occupied a handful of part-time student assistants just to keep up with the classifying and filing of the materials. The center received more mail each day than the cumulative aggregate of the entire staff and administration. Over time the value of the collection—comprised almost entirely of the sort of materials that almost inevitably ends up in the trash—became more and more evident, and scholars began to look to the materials to discover mission or missionary self-representation in a bygone era. It was the stuff of social history.

Thanks to Walls, scores of unlikely collections in similarly implausible locations now exist across the continents, each doing its part to ensure that later generations scholars will have access to available primary-source materials that would otherwise have been discarded or shredded.

Networking and collaboration. In addition to his key role in founding the International Association of Mission Studies (IAMS) as noted above, Walls was instrumental in co-founding with Lamin Sanneh “The Yale-Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and World Christianity,” an informal group of scholars who convene annually “to facilitate discussion and exchange of information about historical aspects of the missionary movement and the development of world Christianity, with special emphasis on the sources for documentation. It is a forum where viewpoints from the fields of political, social, diplomatic, and religious history can converge to reassess the significance of the

²⁶Tim Stafford, “Historian Ahead of His Time: Andrew Walls May Be the Most Important Person You Don’t Know,” posted 2/08/2007. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/February/34.87.html>, accessed October 15, 2010.

missionary movement and its worldwide effects.”²⁷ Like many other worthwhile things, the group was begun somewhat accidentally. Martha Smalley recalls that Andrew Walls and Lamin Sanneh thought it would be appropriate to hold an event in 1992 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of William Carey’s departure for India, marking the symbolic beginning of the modern missionary movement from the West. There were two meetings that first year, one in Yale and one in Edinburgh. These meetings were so successful that the group has ever since convened annually, alternating between Yale University and the University of Edinburgh.

This academic group serves as a venue for both emerging and established scholars in the field, who come from all over the world each year to present papers and engage in discussion germane to world Christianity. The influence of Wall’s ideas on the way these scholars approach and teach their subject is evident. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine an informed discussion of either the missionary movement or world Christianity taking place anywhere without the use of language and concepts traceable directly to Walls.²⁸

Lectures and Publications.²⁹ Anyone who has listened to his lectures and read his essays soon becomes familiar with the recurring themes, emphases and orientation that permeate his vast scholarly written and oral corpus. The bibliography of his known publications numbers in the hundreds of articles, reviews, interviews, and books. It is hard to imagine another scholar whose publications appear in such an eclectic range of journals: *Theology*, *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*, *Novum Testamentum*, *Evangelical Quarterly*, *New Testament*

²⁷ URL <https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-research/programs-and-initiatives/yale-edinburgh-group-world-christianity-and-history-mission>, accessed October 13, 2021.

²⁸ See his essay, “Afterword: Christian Mission in a Five-hundred-year Context,” in *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*, edited by Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross (Orbis 2008), pp. 193–204. Among the most frequently cited of the many essays in which he makes this point in extraordinarily imaginative ways are the first two chapters in his book, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* “The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture,” and “Culture and Coherence in Christian History” (Orbis and T & T Clark, 1996), pp. 3–25.

²⁹ I combine these two categories because Walls is superb essayist, and because most of his essays begin as lectures. As he writes in the Preface to his best-known collection of essays, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Orbis 1996), “Most were originally prepared for oral delivery....” (xi).

*Studies, Vigiliae Christianae, Tyndale House Bulletin, Studia Patristica, *Bulletin of the Society for African Church History, *Journal of Religion in Africa, Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society, Anglican Review, Kingdom Overseas, Hokhma, Trivium, Journal of the Scottish Branch of the Wesley Historical Society, Religion, International Review of Mission, Evangelikale Missiologie, Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research, Mission Focus, Religions in Education, International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Faith and Thought, Bulletin of the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies, Scottish Journal of Religious Studies, Bulletin, Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries, Mission Thrust, Word and World, Transformation, Christian History, Princeton Seminary Bulletin, The Journal of Presbyterian History, Christian History Institute's Glimpses, Yes Magazine, The Bible Translator, Covenant Quarterly, AICMAR Bulletin, Swedish Missiological Themes, Word and Context, and on it goes. Not surprisingly, personal interviews and articles about him likewise appear in unlikely places—Christian and missionary magazines, newspapers, hinting at the range of his influence.*

It is a safe conjecture that his unpublished works may be as voluminous as those gracing the scores of journals, books and encyclopedias in which he has left his trail, since he is famously averse to signing off on essays that fall short of his standard. As editor of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, and director of an organization that has for at least thirty years been a regular stop in his annual cycle of travels and lectures, I speak from firsthand experience. While I was still Director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven [1997-2013], Andrew Walls prepared nineteen-lectures on the Social History of the Western Missionary Movement, delivered at OMSC between 2005 and 2008. Under the rubric “Understanding the Western Missionary Movement,” the lectures were organized under four sub-themes: (1) Developments in a Formative Phase; (2) The Middle Years of Western Missions; (3) Western Missions Move into the Twentieth Century; and (4) The Second World War and the Old Age of the Western Missionary Movement. No lecture series in the history of OMSC drew as much outside interest, or so many Walls devotees. Painstakingly transcribed by Dr. Dwight Baker and Mrs. Lois Baker, these lectures are now (September 2021) being readied for publication under the able supervision of Mark Gornik, Director of City Seminary in New York where Professor Walls was a regular lecturer.

Margins as Center. Walls was not the first to reflect on the encounter between Christianity and Islam. Robert Louis Wilkin wrote eloquently and persuasively about the difference between Christian and Muslim patterns of geographic

expansion.³⁰ Until the advent of Islam, Christian growth and expansion was more-or-less steady, seemingly inexorable. By 600 AD, the known world that mattered was interconnected by churches, Christianity was an honored and necessary contingent to the state, and the future seemed assured. But by the eighth century, Islam had made remarkable progress in making distant, once-Christian regions across North Africa and the Middle East and eastward throughout Asia Minor a part of the Muslim *umma*. Christianity throughout the regions conquered by Islam gradually atrophied and often disappeared. In the eleventh century Asia Minor was thoroughly Christian; five hundred years later, Christianity had virtually disappeared. These lands were never recovered by Christianity and remain Muslim to this day. As Wilken observes,

Set against the history of Islam, the career of Christianity is marked as much by decline and extinction as it is by growth and triumph. (...) Most of the territories that were Christian in the year 700 are now Muslim. Nothing similar has happened to Islam. Christianity seems like a rain shower that soaks the earth and then moves on, whereas Islam appears more like a great lake that constantly overflows its banks to inundate new territory. When Islam arrives, it comes to stay—unless displaced by force, as it was in Spain.³¹

Walls, while fully cognizant of the asymmetries marking the two faiths—the inexorable, irreversible expansion of Islam, on the one hand, and the decline and even extinction of once securely Christian territories, on the other—offered a profoundly theological interpretation of the phenomenon. Christian expansion, he was wont to observe, is not *progressive*, but *serial*.³² In an essay entitled “The Western Discovery of Non-Western Christian Art,” Walls noted that

Christianity is in principle perhaps the most syncretistic of the great religions. Unlike Hinduism, it does not have a unifocal religious culture belonging to a particular soil; nor, like Islam, does it have a common sacred language and a recognizable cultural framework across the globe. Historically, Christian expansion has been serial,

³⁰ See his essay “Christianity Face to Face with Islam,” in *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life*, Number 189 (January 2009), pp. 19–26.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³² “Christianity in the Non-Western World: A Study in the Serial Nature of Christian Expansion,” in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Orbis and T & T Clark, 2005), pp. 27–48.

moving from one heartland to another, fading in one culture as it is implanted in another. Christian expansion involves the serial, generational, and vernacular penetration of different cultures.³³

Furthermore, “Do the resiliency of Islam and the vulnerability of Christianity reflect something of the inherent nature of the two faiths?” he asks. “Does the very freedom of response inherent in the Christian gospel leave it open to ultimate rejection?”³⁴

Christianity and Christendom are not synonymous, Walls reminded us. Indeed, he observed, “the dissolution of Christendom made possible a cultural diffusion that is now in process of transforming it.... Christendom is dead, and Christianity is alive and well without it.”³⁵ In an interview appearing in *Christian Century* (August 2-9, 2000, pp. 792-799), Walls explained that Christianity does not maintain its hold on converts the way Buddhism or Islam do. “One must conclude,” he said, “that there is a certain vulnerability, a fragility, at the heart of Christianity. You might say that this is the vulnerability of the cross. Perhaps the chief theological point is that nobody owns the Christian faith. That is, there is no “Christian civilization” or “Christian culture” in the way that there is an “Islamic culture,” which you can recognize from Pakistan to Tunisia to Morocco.”³⁶ Repeatedly, insistently, and imaginatively, Walls points out that in its earliest days, while it was still a Jewish sect, followers of the Way concluded that new life in Christ could not follow tribal lines. The Good News was conversion to a new way, not proselytism to the Hebrew tribal religion. The cultural identities and lifestyles of new converts were to be transformed from the inside out.³⁷

³³ *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Orbis 1996), p. 173. This essay first appeared in Diana Wood, ed., *The Church and the Arts. Studies in Church History 28* (Blackwell 1992), pp. 571–585.

³⁴ “A History of the Expansion of Christianity Reconsidered: Assessing Christian Progress and Decline,” in Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), pp. 3–26. (p. 13)

³⁵ “Christianity in the Non-Western World: A Study in the Serial Nature of Christian Expansion,” in *Ibid.*, pp. 27–48, (p. 34).

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Andrew F. Walls, “Converts or Proselytes? The Crisis over Conversion in the Early Church,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (January 2004), pp. 2–6.

A Man of the People. Although he was an active and honored member of many learned societies—British Association for the Study of Religions, International Association for Mission Studies, Aberdeen Artists’ Society, and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Missionswissenschaft, to name a few—it was clear that he was never an “ivory tower” intellectual, carrying on a private conversation with an elite group of insiders. He was as comfortable with undergraduates and modestly educated missionaries and church leaders as he was with fellow dons. Insofar as posterity may judge him to have transformed the course of mission and world Christian studies—and those of us in the field believe that he did—it was as much a result of his generosity with the “least of these” as it was his nimble pen and encyclopedic knowledge. There are few who can recall him saying “no” when invited to give a lecture or write a paper, no matter how obscure the invitee or unimpressive the venue.

Added to academic achievements was his lifelong involvement in public service. He served as an Aberdeen City Councilor, as Chairman of the Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums Committee, on the Council for Museums and Galleries in Scotland, on the Committee on Arts and Recreation, and as Chairman of the Disablement Income Group, Scotland. He contributed an article on “Access considerations for handicapped visitors” to the book *Museums and the Handicapped*, published in Leicester in 1976. David Bebbington tells of his surprise at seeing Andrew Walls at the University of Stirling on one occasion. “I asked him if he was attending some church history conference of which I had not heard, but the answer was no, he was there as a trade unionist. ‘The Association of University Teachers,’ I inquired? No, he represented Unison, the union of the manual labourers in the universities. ‘They are the poorest paid,’ he asked, ‘are they not?’ And there was obvious point in the reply. Andrew is the rare sort of person whose remarks of this kind one remembers.”³⁸

His remarkable interest in what even the most unpromising student had to say set him apart from most academic mentors. Whether in a personal conversation, an academic gathering, or a seminar, students and fledgling academics could count on his genuine appreciation for their modest efforts. At the weekly post-graduate seminars at the University of Aberdeen in the late 1970s, a particularly brilliant professor was feared by all of us, since he could be unsparing in his criticism of our faltering efforts. Not so Andrew Walls! He encouraged even those of us most feebly endowed intellectually, finding ways to

³⁸ David W. Bebbington to Jonathan Bonk, in a personal email dated September 4, 2008.

surprise and credit us and our modest research accomplishments with insights that were concealed from our own consciousness! He often understood, in ways that we could not, what it was we were stumbling upon, what it was we were trying to say, and how all this fit into the grand drama of world Christianity. Little wonder that his students flourished!

I once had a list of seventy post-graduate students—men and women from around the world—whose dissertations had been supervised by Walls. There are doubtless many more on this list now, but each of these represented some sphere of academic or ecclesiastical influence, local, regional, national, or even international. Each was the center of a modest or even substantial intellectual, ecclesiastical or missional sphere infused with the ideas and the spirit of Walls. Laughingly referred to several years ago by Orbis editor William Burrows as “The Walls Mafioso,” these protégés can be found in every substantial research center devoted to the study of World Christianity on all five continents.

Some, like Kwame Bediako [1945–2008]—possibly the most brilliant student ever mentored by Walls—made extraordinarily substantial contributions to the way we think about African, and indeed world, Christianities.³⁹ Several serve as editors of prestigious journals in the field; others serve as professors in some of the world’s leading centers of historical research and intellectual thought; some are leaders of flourishing denominations in Africa and Asia. Others teach in more modest seminary and Bible college settings on all the continents, where aspiring ordinands or missionaries receive their training, imbibing a perspective of mission and world Christianity that has been heavily influenced by Andrew Walls. Still others serve as missionaries or as mission executives, as directors of modest research centers, or as research scholars whose influence is exerted on the subterranean foundations of what we know, how we know it, and why it matters. Walls’ influence—from New Zealand to Nigeria, from Ghana to Grenada, from the Vatican to the Church of the Lord Aladura—is worldwide and continues now that he has departed from this life.

A cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea. This short essay can only hint at the impact of Andrew Walls on the way we think about mission and world Christian studies. His influence ripples outward through modestly influential, widely scattered devotees—numbering in the hundreds—around the

³⁹ For his immensely moving tribute to his friend, see Andrew F. Walls, “Kwame Bediako and Christian Scholarship in Africa,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (October 2008), pp. 188–193.

world. His seminal ideas permeate the classrooms, publications, research, archives, and academic gatherings where world Christianity is the subject or the object of interest. Those of us who have been permanently and profoundly transformed by his ideas in turn are affecting those in our own modest orbits of influence. In this way, probably more than it is possible to tell, the “structural problems in mission studies” so illuminatingly outlined by Walls in an essay written twenty years ago⁴⁰ are being addressed in scores of Bible schools, seminaries, research centers, and university departments around the world, especially beyond Christendom’s old heartlands. Church history syllabuses are being subverted, non-Western Christian thought is being taken seriously, and emerging generations are becoming cognizant of realities on the ground. This is how Andrew Walls has changed the course of mission and world Christian studies. May God bless the spirit of his departed servant.

We are still too close to Andrew Walls as a friend, mentor, and exemplar to properly assess his long-term impact on the way academics will think about mission and world Christianity. Such a study will better be undertaken fifty or one hundred years from now. What we *do* see, however, are intimations—“a cloud as small as a man’s hand is rising from the sea”—and those who have eyes to see believe that rain is on the way!

⁴⁰ Andrew F. Walls, “Structural Problems in Mission Studies,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Volume 15, No 4 (October 1991), pp. 146–155.

Andrew Walls: A Quintessential and Dedicated Scholar of African Church History

By Harvey Kwiyani and Deji Ayegboyin⁴¹

Introduction

On Friday, 26 August 2021, a small group of about seventy people gathered at the Aberdeen Methodist Church to pay their last respects and celebrate the remarkable life of Andrew Walls, known to many as the beloved “Prof.”⁴² COVID-19 restrictions made it necessary to limit the number of attendants. If the tributes that poured in online are any reflection of how people valued and loved Andrew Walls, his would have been one of the most attended funerals, bringing together people from all continents as a testament to the many years of his ministry in the academic discipline of World Christianity. It was a surreal moment of utmost humility, deeply characteristic of Prof Walls’ life. One speaker after another told memorable stories of how Andrew Walls had touched their lives in one way or another. Stories from around the world poured forth, appreciating his long life and the many good deeds upon which that life was grounded. Those in attendance who had enjoyed an academic relationship with Andrew Walls spoke of his generously intentional preferential option for marginalized histories of Christianity in the world, and how he worked tirelessly to name and highlight those histories. In doing so, he strived to correct the ways

⁴¹ Harvey Kwiyani, PhD, is a research fellow at the Andrew Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity and Deji Ayegboyin, PhD, is a senior fellow (since 2013) at the Andrew Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool, United Kingdom as well as Former Head, Religious Studies Department, University of Ibadan (Nigeria) and DACB Senior Advisory Council member

⁴² Andrew Walls was born on April 28, 1928 and died on August 12, 2021. At the time of his death, he still held the position of Professor of the History of Missions at Liverpool Hope University in Liverpool, UK. This essay does not rehash his biography in the interest of dedicating its focus to the significance of his work in the shaping of contemporary history of Christianity in Africa. For a biographic account of Andrew Walls’ life, please see Daniel Jeyaraj’s tribute on behalf of Liverpool Hope University at <https://www.hope.ac.uk/news/allnews/remembering-acclaimed-historian-professor-andrew-walls-.html>.

in which the history of Christianity has been distorted so that it appears to be the history of European Christianity.

To a great extent, it was Africa that enjoyed Andrew Walls' attention the most. His close working relationships with such African scholars like Lamin Sanneh, Kwame Bediako, and Jehu Hanciles allowed him to always be at the cutting edge of African Christian scholarship. Many African church leaders studied under him either at Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Liverpool Hope, Princeton, or the Akrofi-Christaller Institute. It is Andrew Walls' work in the history of Christianity in Africa that this essay seeks to celebrate.⁴³

Unmasking False Histories of Africa

The history of Christian missions has, for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, excessively emphasized the narrative of Western missionaries and their marvelous deeds in other parts of the world.⁴⁴ One would be forgiven for believing that mission has always been a domain exclusively reserved for Westerners, both the actual missionaries and their historians. By and large, events outside the Western world are represented as incidental occurrences in the master narrative. Indigenous agents in mission only appear tangentially as supporting actors in the story of white Western missionaries. Fortunately, since the 1980s, some scholars have increasingly responded to the distortions in such an approach.⁴⁵

⁴³ Harvey Kwiyani worked with Andrew Walls at Liverpool Hope University where he was Professor of the History of mission until his death. Deji Ayegboyan worked for a while closely with Andrew Walls in West Africa, especially in Ghana and Nigeria where he is based.

⁴⁴ Harvey Kwiyani, ed., *Africa Bears Witness: Mission Theology and Praxis in the 21st Century* (Nairobi: ATNP, 2021), 6. In addition, Allan Anderson, for example, observes that historians and hagiographers of Pentecostalism have often reflected biases interpreting history from predominantly white, usually North American perspectives, neglecting the vital and often more significant work of Asian, African, American and Latin American Pentecostal pioneers. See Allan H. Anderson, "Writing the Pentecostal History of Africa, Asia and Latin America," *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education* 25, no. 2 (2004): 140.

⁴⁵ Peter Brown focuses on the shift in European Christian identity from an East-West Mediterranean axis to a South-North axis. See Peter Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2012). See also John Wayland Coakley and Andrea Sterk, *Readings in World Christian History: Earliest*

Evidently, it is ineffectual if one understands the roots, trends, and future development of Christian missions without a proper grasp of its background. History in this sense will encompass the scientific approach to history, historiography, and objectivity in the analysis of the facts being studied. In his book *The Growth of African Civilization*, Basil Davidson referred to some writers as imperialist historians who engaged in what he called “bad history” because “they allow their prejudice and personal feelings to get the better of them.”⁴⁶ He expressed grief that some Eurocentric writers were so prejudiced that they alleged that African culture and civilization were so backward, sterile, fruitless, and disabliging for any intellectual stimulation that it was safe to conclude that Africa had no history of her own.⁴⁷ There is a great deal of falsehood in such telling of African history.

Indeed, Africans have a long history of their own which is a legitimate part of global history. Andrew Walls often lamented that the particularity of European and American histories has resulted in the denigration of the place of African Christianity in mission history. He complained that Church History, even when taught on African soil, and even when taught by African scholars, often meant the history of Christianity in the Western tradition.⁴⁸ Walls challenged Africans to stand up and insist that, in the age of globalization, Africa be studied on its own terms to reflect its unique historical and social circumstances.

Christianity to 1453, vol. 1 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), ix. Another good example of this shift is Emma Wild-Wood’s book on Apostle Kivebulaya. See Emma Wild-Wood, *The Mission of Apolo Kivebulaya: Religious Encounter and Social Change in the Great Lakes c. 1865-1935* (Suffolk: James Currey, 2020).

⁴⁶ Basil Davidson, *The Growth of African Civilisation: A History of West Africa 1000-1800* (London: Longmans, 1966), 1. This book was written with F. K. Buah.

⁴⁷ Kwame Bediako argues that Anthropology and Missiology are not really universal sciences since they reflect Western ethnocentrism and tend to set other cultures, viewed as exotic, over against the West. See Kwame Bediako, “Mission Issues in Africa Today,” *ATF Bulletin* 5 (October) (1997). Mbiti also pointed out that “one of the dominating attitudes in this early period was the assumption that African beliefs, cultural characteristics and even ‘foods,’ were all borrowed from the outside world. German scholars pushed this assumption to the extreme, and have not all abandoned it completely to this day...” See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1971), 6.

⁴⁸ Brian Stanley, “Profile of Andrew Walls,” *Epworth Review* 28, no. 4 (2001): 18.

Andrew Walls: A Foremost Historian of African Christianity

Andrew Walls is eminently qualified to raise objections on the earlier mindset on the study of missions in Africa and to give appropriate directives on what unbiased scholarship should look like. He founded and served as the pioneer editor for several periodicals that promoted research on non-Western Christianity.⁴⁹ These include *Sierra Leone Bulletin of the Society for African Church History*, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, and *Annual Survey of Literature on Christianity in the non-Western World*. Walls was a pioneer and academic statesman in the study of missions and world Christianity.

His interests in African Christianity spanned a period of sixty-four years, starting in 1957 when, after finishing his studies at Exeter College in Oxford and working at Tyndale House in Cambridge for five years, he moved to Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone to “teach those in training for the ministry (...) church history.”⁵⁰ He went to Sierra Leone believing that church history was full of lessons to be imparted to the younger churches from the accumulated wisdom of the older ones.⁵¹ His transformation of mind took place when, as he says, he was “happily pontificating on the patchwork quilt of diverse fragments that constitutes second-century Christian literature” only to realize that he was “actually living in a second-century church.”⁵² He quickly noticed that his students responded to learning about the Early Church as if they were actually living at the time of the Early Church. Of course, his students in Sierra Leone, just like in the wider continent of Africa, were living in the second century of their Christianity.

Many years later, Walls would say that realizing that African Christians responded warmly to Early Church history led him to further appreciate the geographical spread of the Early Church, that it was not restricted to the Latin-speaking western parts of the Roman Empire like Rome and Carthage only. It also spread to the Greek-speaking eastern parts of the Empire in the East, to Constantinople and Antioch, down to Egypt, Nubia and Ethiopia, as far as

⁴⁹ Lamin Sanneh, “Andrew Finlay Walls,” in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 714.

⁵⁰ Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), xiii.

⁵¹ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xiii.

⁵² Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xiii.

Arabia, India and Persia. In addition, he discovered that Africa needed new theological curricula because those imported from Europe had limited relevance among African Christians. This meant, for Walls himself, that he had to learn the Christian story anew, paying attention to this new second-century church in Africa and what it had to say to the old traditions of Western Christianity. While in Sierra Leone, he was elected the founding secretary of the Society for African Church History.⁵³

In 1962, he moved and taught in Nigeria, where he became the head of the new Department of Religion at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. He left Nigeria and returned to Scotland weeks before the 1966 war. Brain Stanley recalls that at Nsukka, Andrew Walls “developed African curricula and methods of teaching religion appropriate for a newly independent country in Africa which combined strong Muslim and Christian traditions both of which were undergirded by the continuing vitality of assumptions of African traditional or primal religion.”⁵⁴

Throughout his time in Nigeria, he promoted the study of Christianity in its non-Western forms. With this background, he initiated the establishment of the Centres for the Study of Christianity in the non-Western World (CSCNWW) first at Aberdeen in 1982 and later at Edinburgh since 1987.⁵⁵ Stanley observed that departments such as that established by Walls at Nsukka pioneered a model for the study of religion in primal societies that was followed by universities in Europe and North America.⁵⁶

Over the ensuing years, Walls observed that the “labors of the missionary movement and the cross-cultural process in Christian history have borne fruit and catalyzed a shift in the center of gravity of Christianity that has immense implications for the theology of the future.”⁵⁷ As such, Andrew Walls has, in his three major works, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*,⁵⁸ *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*,⁵⁹ and *Crossing Cultural Frontiers*:

⁵³ Stanley, “Profile of Andrew Walls,” 20.

⁵⁴ Stanley, “Profile of Andrew Walls,” 20.

⁵⁵ Sanneh, “Andrew Finlay Walls,” 714.

⁵⁶ Stanley, “Profile of Andrew Walls,” 20.

⁵⁷ Stanley, “Profile of Andrew Walls,” 9.

⁵⁸ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*.

⁵⁹ Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002).

*Studies in the History of World Christianity*⁶⁰ made a theological commentary on the shifting of Christianity and anticipated the emergence of World Christianity while seeking to begin to retell the history of Christianity in ways that honor the non-Western trajectories that have been lost along the way. They also begin to argue for a change in the ways we understand mission to include the scholarly voices of non-Westerners. Indeed, in a 1991 article, he lamented the “the untroubled rule of palefaces over the academic [or theological] world.”⁶¹ In the decades of his work, Walls repeatedly sought to bring our attention to the new fact that the Christian heartlands are no longer in Western Europe and North America but are instead in South America, Africa, and Eastern Asia. He was of the opinion that the future of the Christian faith, its shape in the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries, is being decided by events which are now, or will be in the near future, taking place in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, stating that, “new agendas for theology will appear in Africa.”⁶²

He continued to visit Africa numerous times over the fifty-five years following his 1966 return to Aberdeen, while drawing students from around the world to study with him in Scotland. Indeed, Walls has been involved in various roles in the development of many African scholars, most of whom have passed through the corridors of the Aberdeen University and the University of Edinburgh. In an article about Walls, rightly entitled “Historian Ahead of His Time,” *Christianity Today* suggests that for most North American Christians, Walls could be the most important person they do not know.⁶³

Andrew Walls’ Significance in African Church History

Andrew Walls’ work in the study of African church history or African Christian thought stands out. The fact that he has three books to his name (plus one more

⁶⁰ Andrew F. Walls, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Studies in the History of World Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017).

⁶¹ Andrew F. Walls, “Structural Problems in Mission Studies,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 15, no. 4 (1991): 152.

⁶² Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process*, 85-86.

⁶³ Tim Stafford, “Historian Ahead of His Time: Andrew Walls May Be the Most Important Person You Don’t Know,” *Christianity Today* (2007). <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/february/34.87.html>, accessed September 20, 2021.

co-edited with Cathy Ross⁶⁴) does not do justice to his legacy which is revealed to some extent in Williams Burrows' edited volume, *Understanding World Christianity: The Vision and Work of Andrew F. Walls*.⁶⁵ To really appreciate his impact, readers need to look beyond the book catalogues and search for his name in journal search engines and in video repositories. Indeed, some of his most significant contribution is on YouTube and video repositories of the many institutions where he spoke over the decades.

Speaking from an African perspective, Walls' work can be understood along three key issues. The first important issue he wrestled with has to do with the relevance of history in mission. He lamented that not the whole spectrum of Christian history has received adequate attention.⁶⁶ In his work among African Christians, Andrew Walls was a church historian focused on mission. According to him, the missiology and church history of any region share common ground. If this has not seemed to be an obvious area to explore, it is because some writers equate Christian history exclusively with Western history. As long as this misconception persists, church history and mission will wrangle at arms' length instead of seriously engaging with each other. His work brought them together in a very exemplary manner. His church history is mission history and his mission history is also church history. Walls always maintained that it is important to have a broad outlook on history before we can say that we are studying the history of the universal Christian Church; but we must also understand that local histories are important.

In seminars and conversations, Walls often expressed his discomfort with the restricted and parochial outlook in Church History, including Mission History, citing his own experience in Scotland where students being prepared to become church ministers followed a three-year syllabus in missions that focused on three areas: (1) the Early Church, (2) the Reformation, and (3) the history of the church *in Scotland*. They were not expected to know what happened to other churches in various parts of the world. Although a chance was given for African church history as an optional (elective) course, some were concerned that the syllabus of that class distorted history because it kept the students from learning

⁶⁴ Andrew F. Walls and Cathy Ross, eds., *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008).

⁶⁵ William R. Burrows, Mark R. Gornik, and Janice A. McLean, *Understanding World Christianity: The Vision and Work of Andrew F. Walls* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011).

⁶⁶ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 1.

about the church in other contexts. Walls affirmed that nothing large or lasting in missiology could be fully understood without learning about the advent of Christianity in Africa. He argued that the special place for Africa in the history of redemption is hinted at in the New Testament, in Acts 8, for instance. Walls claimed that the encounter of the Ethiopian eunuch with Philip is a reminder that Africa, the lands beyond the Nile, would have a Christian history too, one that was not yet charted and one that was distinct from the story of Asia and Europe, which is the concern of the Acts of Apostles.⁶⁷

He recalled also that in the history of the Early Church, among other things:

Africans provided much of the intellectual task force of early Christianity who developed the groundwork of Christian theology. Most of the seminal theologians of the early centuries belonged to the African continent. Africa was also the source of Christian innovations, of new, radical, and sometimes controversial movements.⁶⁸

The second critical issue in the assessment of Walls' understanding of the importance of history in missiology is that the development of mission is not static, but rather dynamic. He is deeply suspicious of those who perceive history as immutable, preferring to define historical authenticity strictly by reference to the past. Walls insisted that since mission history is concerned with the spread of the church, the study of history must take into account where the history of mission is proceeding. John Parratt quoted Walls as saying as early as 1976 that: within the last three centuries the position of Christianity had changed from being a kind of "tribal religion of the Caucasian peoples" to becoming a truly world religion. Today the greatest areas of Christian strength are no longer in the West; and in Europe in particular Christianity is in marked recession, losing in adhesion, respect and influence. Its main strength lies rather in Latin America, Western Africa, the Rift Valley, and the Pacific, where it has most adherents and where its impact upon society is most widespread.⁶⁹ The realization that Christianity is dynamic made Walls appreciate that as much as it was good to teach and follow the curriculum that was primarily made in and for Europe, there

⁶⁷ Andrew F Walls, "Africa in Christian History: Retrospect and Prospect," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 1, no. 1 (1998): 20.

⁶⁸ Walls, "Africa in Christian History," 2.

⁶⁹ John Parratt, *Reinventing Christianity: African Theology Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 1.

was a need to recognize the value of the history of Christianity of West Africa where he was working even though there was no written literature on African Christian history.

Third, Walls declared that there were obvious glaring gaps in our knowledge of people, places, and activities of nationals in most of the earliest contacts that were documented in personal memoirs, diaries, and journals because they were published from the missionaries' viewpoints.⁷⁰ He also expressed the fact that because there was no follow-up on the new developments in Africa, the histories of some places which had once been prominent would be forgotten. Indeed, some places were neglected because they might have been inaccessible to the missionaries, but that does not mean that those places did not exist or were not important. Walls contended that it is only when the history of Africa is studied as a whole that it would become evident what Africans have done for their own development and the development of mission. Allan Anderson underscored this point when he explained how and why the roles of thousands of national workers in early Pentecostalism were overlooked or marginalized. Traditional ways of telling history emphasized perspectives that came "from above." They gave exaggerated importance to the roles of the missionaries and were often full of historiographical imperialism and ethnocentrism. Indeed, a great deal of missionary biographies from Africa sounds like hagiography. The reason, according to Allan Anderson, is clear:

Missionary paternalism, even if it was "benevolent paternalism" was widely practiced... white missionaries kept control of churches and their national founders, and especially of their finances they raised in Western Europe and North America. Most wrote home as if they were mainly (if not solely) responsible for the progress of the work there.⁷¹

As a result of this marginalization of the roles of nationals, Walls embarked on modest research with the local Christian community. Due to the mentality people had about Christian history, many thought that Walls was deluded in his research approach and methodology on the history of Christian mission in West Africa. It was thought then that a Church History needed Greek and Latin to back it up. But then, as Walls stated, "it was soon clear, however, that work on the African material was not only 'real' Church History, but it was

⁷⁰ Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986), 56.

⁷¹ Anderson, "Writing the Pentecostal History," 146.

going to be as demanding and laborious, and (...) there were fewer guidelines, fewer precedents, hardly any instruments of the study.”⁷² Consequently, Walls became one of the advocates of a “new history”⁷³ which is a deliberate reaction against traditional history and its paradigms.

Fourth, Walls emphasized that some deep injuries have been done to mission in Africa because of the neglect of history and the significance of primal religion. Primal religion, in a way, is the context into which Christianity was born. Context in this sense implies understanding and insight into the realities of our particular situation as part and parcel of the wider total reality of Christian scholarship, history, and witness.⁷⁴ Undeniably, in Africa and other Majority World societies, primal religion served as the background into which Christianity was born. Unfortunately, many missionaries and scholars refused to study the forms of African traditional religions appropriately and sympathetically. Missionaries frequently referred to the nationals in their newsletters, diaries, and journals as “heathen,” “primitive,” and “savage.” They described African religions as paganism, heathenism, idolatry, fetishism, animism, and other derogatory terms.⁷⁵ The bizarre picture that illustrates the position of Africa is articulated by James Coleman:

Tropical Africa was of special interest to Christian missionaries. The heathen was the missionary target, and of all peoples in the non-European world the African was believed to be the most heathen. In early missionary literature Africa was characterized “as one universal den of desolation, misery, and crime, and certainly, of all the divisions of the globe it has always had an unfortunate preeminence in degradation, wretchedness and woe.” The reports of many early traders, explorers, and pioneer missionaries contained vivid and

⁷² Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xiv.

⁷³ Anderson explains that the “new history” is concerned with the whole of human activity, “history from below” rather than “history from above,” history taken from the perspective of the powerless rather than from that of the rich and powerful. (See Anderson, “Writing the Pentecostal History,” 149).

⁷⁴ Bediako adds that the relevance of contextuality has within it the potential of inter contextuality. In other words, studies of context need to be seen as studies of part of total story. See Bediako, “Mission Issues in Africa Today.”

⁷⁵ Idowu pointed out that in studying African Traditional religion, even African students entered upon their studies with an academic temper dictated by the attitudes and terminologies of foreign writers. See E. Bọlaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition* (London: SCM Press, 1973), 108-34.

frequently exaggerated accounts of primitive savagery and barbarism. In 1873 a returned missionary said: "The Chinaman meets you with the stolid morality of his Confucianism; the Hindoo with astute logic for his Pantheism ... When I carry my torch into the caves of Africa, I meet only filthy birds of darkness ... Thus, whereas the non-Christian East was portrayed as having traditions of ancient civilizations, Africa was believed to have nothing but moral darkness"⁷⁶

Walls confessed that he fell into the same trap, which some earlier church historians had fallen into. He tried hard to avoid the importance of African religion and society in the transformation of mission.⁷⁷ However, it soon dawned on him that just as the religious background of the Roman Empire was essential for Patristic Studies and the process of interactions between the Christian faith and primal religions of Europe were helpful for a better grasp of how Western Christians came to appropriate the Gospel, so was it necessary to understand in a better light the encounters of religions and Christianity in Africa.⁷⁸ Walls found out that, in his case, the work involved addressing the forms of African religion and society. This realization led him to think seriously about the process of interactions between the Christian faith and the primal religions of Europe. He wondered about the process by which his own ancestors and those of the Western Christians came to appropriate the Gospel and other religions of Europe, and how parallel they were to the primal religions today. More importantly, he realized that it is possible to understand those old texts better in the light of the encounters of religions presently visible in Africa.⁷⁹

In order to arrive at an appropriate methodology of relating the background of a place to its history and to remove the possible biases that are informed by scholar's background, Walls attracted to the University of Edinburgh project funding notably from the Pew Charitable Trust of Philadelphia for a project on African Christianity.⁸⁰ He then brought together a mixed group of Western and African students to study World Christianity. This brought to him an exciting revelation, seeing how African Christians responded

⁷⁶ James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 91.

⁷⁷ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xvi.

⁷⁸ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xv.

⁷⁹ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xvi.

⁸⁰ Stanley, "Profile of Andrew Walls," 23.

to the documents in a way that reflected the origins of Western European Christianity, and the insights they brought to those documents. One cannot but appreciate Walls' picture of a big, crowded theatre with a huge stage and a stream of actors passing across it, but no one sees the whole of it. He pointed out that everyone in the theatre sees the same play and hears the same words, but they have different views of the conjunction of words and action. Those on one side get a sharply focused view of certain scenes, which those placed elsewhere do not have to the same degree. Even when the scene changes, and the position is reversed, and the main action is on another part of the stage, still viewers will not be able to view the whole stage at once. In this illustration, he mentioned a very important point when he avers, "Those who get up at the interval and compare notes with friends sitting elsewhere in the auditorium will perhaps understand the action best of all."⁸¹ Walls' conclusion from all this shows that global missiology would not be understood properly until attention is paid to knowing or writing appropriately the Majority World church history and theology.⁸²

African Church History After Andrew Walls

Failure to include the Majority World in church history for many years has fractured the discipline. This view is underscored and strengthened by historians of the African church like Ogbu-Kalu,⁸³ Lamin Sanneh,⁸⁴ Kwame Bediako,⁸⁵ John Pobee,⁸⁶ Elizabeth Isichei,⁸⁷ Mercy Oduyoye,⁸⁸ and many others. Sanneh insisted, like Walls, that "to detach the African factor in mission is to misunderstand the history of Christianity in its African transformation."⁸⁹ A careful study of the African Independent Churches and indigenous Pentecostal

⁸¹ Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, 44.

⁸² Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xv.

⁸³ Ogbu Kalu, *African Christianity: An African story* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2007).

⁸⁴ Lamin O. Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1983).

⁸⁵ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995).

⁸⁶ John S. Pobee, *Toward an African Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979).

⁸⁷ Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁸⁸ Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing*.

⁸⁹ Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, xii.

movements that were not started by Western missionaries needs to be done time and again. Avoiding doing so may still lead to a biased African Church History, for such churches have contributed so much to the growth of Christianity in Africa. For a fruitful study of these churches, it is necessary to consult and involve the leaders of these very churches, other than writing from hearsay, because these very leaders hold the very truth and the history of their churches

Second, Sanneh acknowledged the fact that there are some aspects of traditional history that have to be built upon as foundations to writing the church history of the Global South. For this, Third World (sic) scholars must express some gratitude.⁹⁰ However, as Lamin Sanneh pointed out, “We need a shift in our categories of data compilation and analysis to take adequate account of the new African Christian material. In faithfulness to that material there must be a genuine plural tradition of academic scholarship to reflect on the data and to reconstruct it as a faithful component of the African world to which it belongs and from which it speaks to us.”⁹¹ In fact, a profound study of the writings of Ogbu Kalu, Lamin Sanneh, and John Pobee shows that they recognized that the foundational history of West Africa is important. However, they maintained that the historical records colored with erroneous conceptions must be deleted. Walls agreed that there are some local crucial issues, which traditional Church History overlooks. For example, it refuses to put on record some evils that were committed by the European colonizers of [Africa and Latin America] against the church.⁹²

In reaction to this, historians like Ogbu Kalu and Elizabeth Isichei, among others, have pointed out that there are many perspectives to having authentic Church History of Africa, which will not be stained by traditional Western historians. It is, however, important to note that in evaluating the colonial history of Africa, scholars of African missiology must not fall into the double-edged trap of either glorifying the missionaries and not looking at their lives and ministries critically or blaming everything on them. Yes, there existed missionaries who were critical of colonialism but there also many who were supportive of colonialism.⁹³ The history of European colonialism and missionary

⁹⁰ Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, xii.

⁹¹ Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, xii.

⁹² Walls, *The Missionary Movement*, xiv

⁹³ For instance, see Harvey Kwiyani’s discussion of Joseph Booth and William Colenso in Harvey C. Kwiyani, “Mission After George Floyd: On White Supremacy, Colonialism, and World Christianity,” *ANVIL* 36, no. 3 (2020).

work in Africa must be told courageously. Church history needs the truth—if it is not true, it is not history. Of course, all history is mixture of good and bad; there is no need to whitewash it. There is a lot to learn from the past if one is not biased and it could help us to write a better African history.

Concerning the re-writing of traditional history, Walls explained that there are some disciplines, some backgrounds, and some foundations that must be understood and taken into consideration before events can be appropriately reported. Walls also reported how he trained his postgraduate students to break away from the traditional forms of writing history. Similarly, Walls felt that there were some areas in the Majority World history that could not be appropriately explored because traditional historians held those areas were not important. Evidence abounds now from African historians showing that the history of the church in all nooks and crannies of Africa is vital. Historians like Jean Comby are struck by the fact that there were immense territories in which there were either no missionaries or very few on the field. Such regions are literally glossed over by historians in spite of the fact that the history of such places should have helped to understand why Christianity failed there and succeeded elsewhere.⁹⁴

Andrew Walls addressed the fact that a study of African traditional background and society is crucial to the Church in Africa.⁹⁵ Most African scholars rightly emphasized the importance of African religious heritage to a comprehensive understanding of the African people and their history. It is certainly true that the real encounter between Christianity and traditional religion took place in the heart of African Christians. African scholars, therefore, agreed that a careful study of traditional religion helps to bring to light certain aspects of African life that relate to the phenomenon of the rich and diverse religious life that has flourished among Africans for centuries. Those things include finding out about relationships between divinities and ordinary life; how common objects like water, stone or wood could be transformed into a ritual symbol. Is there a way this transformation has become a mediation and intercession in African Christianity? And is there a way the recognition of the plural world of the divinities contributes to the African understanding of the universal doctrines of the Holy Scriptures? The understanding of these and many other questions can help to determine the way the Church was assimilated in communities and societies. The same could also be used to determine how the Church was

⁹⁴ Jean Comby, *How to Understand the History of Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press, 1996), 103.

⁹⁵ Walls, "Africa in Christian History," 2.

assimilated in other Global South countries. This, in the end, would help scholars of the Global South Church History to avoid bias.

Conclusion

Evidently, one of the striking matters arising in the works of Andrew Walls is that it has become clear that from the end of the second millennium to the present, the Christian faith has become a predominantly non-Western religion. According to Walls, the things by which people recognize and judge Christianity for good or for ill will increasingly be determined in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The characteristic doctrines, liturgy, ethical codes, and social applications of the faith will increasingly be prominent in the Majority World.

Current developments within African Christianity indicate that these were not wild claims, for not only is Christianity growing rapidly, but “in African hands, the faith has also been experiencing much transformation with an impact that is being felt across the Western World.”⁹⁶ If it is true that the non-Western World would provide a model for reshaping religion and the Christian faith now and in the future, then we must take the history of their mission seriously just as European missionaries once believed in their divine task of evangelizing what they called the Dark Continent. African Church leaders today are convinced of their mission to bring the Gospel back to those who originally provided it. As Sanneh posited, “the recognition of the African factor is by now overdue and is of inestimable value in the rediscovery of the real origins of African Christianity.”⁹⁷

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⁹⁶ Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, xiii.

⁹⁷ Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, xiii.

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Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Benedict Binta-Akiiki Ssettuuma (1967-2021) of Uganda: A Great Loss among Young Generations of African Theologians

By Francis Anekwe Oborji⁹⁸

Benedict Binta-Akiiki Ssettuuma, whose sad news of his passing unto glory of our better home in heaven we received on Saturday, June 19, 2021, was a Ugandan Catholic Priest from Masaka Diocese, ordained in 1996. From 2000 to 2005, he was a student in our Faculty of Missiology at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, Rome, where I had the privilege of having him as a student, and later a supervisor of both his Licentiate and Doctorate degrees in Missiology. Just last year, 2020, when the editors of one of my new books, titled, *Towards African Missiology: Issues of New Language for African Christianity* (Xlibris Publishers, Bloomington, Indiana 2020), asked me who I would like to write the preface to the book, I did not waste even a second in telling them to approach Benedict Ssettuuma for it. As would be expected, Ssettuuma wrote a very moving preface. I am so grateful. He was always ready to oblige in anything related to African scholarship and theological development on the continent. He was a Pan-African scholar of inculturation and contextual theology. I was devastated to hear the sad news of his untimely death. I have yet to come to terms with the reality that he is no more with us in this transitory world. May God receive his good and gentle soul in Heaven. Amen!

To date, Benedict Ssettuuma is regarded as one of the rare geniuses among the students who passed through our Faculty of Missiology of the Pontifical Urbaniana University, Rome, in recent time. Before coming to study in Rome in 2000, Ssettuuma had worked for four years as chaplain at St. Charles Lwanga Kasasa Senior Secondary school and at St. John Mary Muzeeyi Novitiate of the Brothers of Christian Instruction at Kasasa, while helping out in pastoral work in Bukulula Parish. Here he taught Religious Education, Moral Formation and Physics and at the same time, he taught Liturgy and Bible to the novices.

Small in stature, but mighty in intellect and scholarship, as soon as he arrived to study missiology at Urbaniana, Ssettuuma began to manifest his

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interest in African theology and inculturation and theology in general. His doctoral thesis was entitled, “Inculturation as Liberation in Uganda in the Writings of John Mary Waliggo” (Rome, 2005). The late John Mary Waliggo, a pioneer African theologian from Uganda, was his maternal uncle. Fr Waliggo influenced to a great extent his nephew Benedict right from the latter's childhood, by entering the priesthood and taking an interest in theological scholarship, African theology, and inculturation.

Earlier, as a doctoral student in Rome, Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi, had published Ssettuuma's seminal book on African theology, entitled: *Mission As Integral Liberation In Africa* (2004). A prolific writer indeed, and a theological worker of first hour, Ssettuuma published also some creative and down-to-earth novels (fiction), even as a student, as he pursued his specialization studies in Missiology in Rome. Famous among these novels of his, are the following two titles, now translated into different European languages, because of their creativity, scholarship, the originality of the author, and the novelty of their African perspective: *Tension at The Gate Of Heaven* (Rome, 2002) and *The Italian Autobus: A Diary of an Alien Student* (Rome, 2003). He published other such creative novels while doing his studies here in Rome between 2000 and 2005.

A motivating lecturer and seminary formator [trainer of novices] until his demise, and since his return from Rome after his doctoral studies in 2005, Ssettuuma had been serving his local church in Uganda as a professor at St. Mary's National Major Seminary Ggaba, Uganda. Here he founded the prestigious *The Waliggo - A Philosophical and Theological Journal*, in honor of his maternal uncle, late Fr. John Mary Waliggo. Fr. Waliggo, himself, was an intellectual giant who served both church and state in Uganda without compromising his identity as a priest and citizen. Ssettuuma had decided to keep alive the legacy of John Mary Waliggo by founding a scholarly journal in his name. Now that Ssettuuma has gone to meet the Lord, it is to be hoped that the authorities of St. Mary's National Major Seminary Ggaba, will keep alive this legacy by seeing that the Journal *Waliggo*, continues to be published periodically, even now that the founding editor, Benedict Ssettuuma is no more with us in this physical world.

In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say, that Ssettuuma was a theological worker of first hour. A Google search for his publications brings up an impressive list. A selected bibliography of his theological and missiological (and other) publications can be found at the end of this tribute.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that from 2016, when he founded

the prestigious *The Waliggo - A Philosophical and Theological Journal* until his death, Ssettuuma had been serving as the editor of the Journal. Each year, he would publish at least two issues of the volume. This was in addition to his heavy academic load as a lecturer and formator in the Major Seminary.

Ssettuuma had no time for himself. He spent himself—his time, energy, talent and charism—for others, especially devouring the works of ancient and modern sages, and gaining wisdom especially by reflecting on and writing about the mystery of our faith in God, revealed in Jesus Christ, and the mission of salvation that God has entrusted to His church on earth.

Through his scholarship, teaching apostolate, and numerous publications, Ssettuuma, in these few years of his life on earth, was able to impact and influence many people for good. He was able also to achieve, in such a short span of life, what many people who lived for a longer time on earth were not able to achieve for God, humanity, and society. Through his scholarship, teaching apostolate, and publications, Ssettuuma was able to share with us his humanity, friendship, cheerfulness, and above all, his faith in Jesus Christ. He was able, through his writings and teaching apostolate, to communicate to the world, in a language most accessible to us all, the Mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and the mission God has entrusted to the Church, and to believers, including ourselves.

Ssettuuma, while with us in this mortal world spent his time, night and day, reading and reflecting on the Word of God in the Scriptures. And on the Church Fathers, on the Magisterium of the Church, on the works of great and holy theologians of all times; on African wisdom, philosophy and thought; and on the ancient and modern sciences and human studies (humanities), and developments.

Consumed by his desire to serve God, humanity and society better, through his scholarship, teaching apostolate, writings and publications, he had little or no time, even to take care of his physical health. He was consumed with the things of God, the spiritual and intellectual welfare of others, all for the sake of the Kingdom of God, and for his faith in the Risen Christ, our Lord and Savior.

The path Benedict Ssettuuma chose for himself was the same path that great theologians of the past have trod—men such as Thomas Aquinas, Karl Rahner, Karl Barth, Abott Vincent Mulago of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Stephen Ezeanya of Nigeria. It was the path followed by other contemporary African theologians such as, Charles Nyamiti of Tanzania, John Mbiti of Kenya, Lamin Sanneh of Gambia, Kwame Bediako of Ghana, Engelbert

Mveng and Jean Marc Ela of Cameroun. This includes his great late uncle, John Mary Waliggo of Uganda.

Now that Ssettuuma had gone to meet the Lord and all those great theologians of the past, in the communion of all the Saints in heaven, this is our prayer for him:

May the Risen Christ, in whom he believed and whom he served all his life, and on whose Divine-saving Mysteries he reflected and wrote so gloriously, reward him with the eternal gift of life everlasting in heaven. Amen!

Adieu, Fr. Benedict Ssettuuma, Jr.

May the angels of God receive you at the gate of heaven. Amen.

'La n'udo' – Rest in the peace of the Risen Christ in heaven. Amen!

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- . *The Crying Old Man from the Sea*. Kampala: Angel Agencies, 2010.

[There are other works by Ssettuuma too numerous to mention here.]

Editor's note:

Benedict Ssettuuma contributed original biographies to the DACB on the following Ugandan Catholic figures: [John Muswabuzi](#), [John Mary Waliggo](#), [Benedict Mutuluki Ssettuuma](#), [Maria Levocata Nakakeeto](#), [Francis Mukasa Bita](#), [Bazilio Lumu](#), [Adrian Kivumbi Ddungu](#). We are very grateful for his historical work in remembering for the generations to come the Africans whose witness helped to build the church in Africa.

M.S.

DACB Author Spotlight: Dr. Michael Adeleke Ogunewu

I would like to take this opportunity to honor the legacy of one of the DACB's exceptionally prolific authors and educators, Michael Adeleke Ogunewu, described here, in the draft of a 2015 article I wrote for Orita:

Fortunately, in some places, local historians have made it their responsibility to track the life stories of Christian founders and leaders after their death. For the last ten years in Ogbomoso and Ibadan, Nigeria, Dr. Michael Leke Ogunewu, a lecturer in Church History, has been collecting obituaries, eulogies, and other documents, including oral interviews, on recently deceased Christian leaders. He then uses these sources to write their biographies for the [DACB]. A search for the author's name, in this case, Michael Leke Ogunewu, will turn up at least twenty to thirty biographies on the DACB website. In addition, as a lecturer, he has taught doctoral seminars in which he has required his students to write biographies of Nigerian Christian figures which have then been submitted for publication on the DACB website. The result is that Ogunewu is responsible for close to fifty biographies of significant Nigerian Christian leaders in the DACB either as an author or a supervisor. Most recently, he collaborated with DACB Advisory Council member Prof. Deji Isaac Ayegboyin, Head of the Religious Studies Department of the University of Ibadan, on a project for the *Journal of African Christian Biography*, a publication of the DACB. He and Ayegboyin co-authored the preface to the August-September issue (which featured three biographies written by Olusegun Obasanjo, former military head of state (1976-1979) and president, Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999-2007)). (...)

Thanks to the persistent work of historical research, which is a fruit of Ayegboyin's visionary leadership and Ogunewu's writing and teaching, a rough picture of Christianity in Nigeria is beginning to emerge in the growing collection of biographies in the DACB.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ The full description of Ogunewu's generous legacy (quoted above) was not included in the final published article. "Oral History as an Essential Tool for the Historian

What follows is the most recent of Ogunewu's published biographies: the updated story of Samuel Titilola Oladele Akande's life and ministry. Faithful historians like Ogunewu ensure that we do not lose the memory of African Christian ancestors of the church. We raise ululations and hand clapping expressions of our gratitude to all who have contributed to the work of the DACB.

Michèle Sigg, Editor.

* * *

Akande, Samuel Titilola Oladele
1926 - 2020
Nigerian Baptist Convention
Nigeria

Samuel Titilola Oladele Akande was a Nigerian Baptist minister held in very high esteem by the Baptist communities in Nigeria, Africa, and the world at large. He was the third indigenous general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. He served the Convention meritoriously in various capacities for forty years, from 1951 to 1991. For the last twelve of those years, he was the general secretary. To his many admirers, he was a dutiful minister, a courageous preacher, a talented teacher, and, some would say, the "best Nigerian Baptist leader ever produced."

Birth and Parental Background

Samuel Akande was born in Awe, Oyo State of Nigeria on March 31, 1926, into the family of Daniel Oladele Akande and Susainah Ayannihun of the Onsa-Olapeleke's compound. Samuel's father was a Baptist, while his mother was from a Catholic home. In those days, denominational prejudice was rife in the church, making it almost impossible for a Protestant Christian to marry a Catholic. Therefore, the agreement of the two families to the marriage of Daniel and Susainah can only be attributed to God's providence. After marrying in 1923, Susainah gave birth to Samuel, their first child three years later in 1926.

of African Christianity: The Case of the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*," in *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XLVII/1&2 (June & December 2015): 75-88.

Education and Early Work

A few years after his birth, Samuel's parents migrated to the Gold Coast, the present Republic of Ghana, in search of greener pastures, taking their infant son with them. Samuel's education thus began in Ghana, where he attended the A.M.E. Zion Primary School, the Salvation Army School, and the Aggrey Memorial Primary School until 1937, when he was brought back to his hometown of Awe. He continued his primary education in Awe at the Awe Baptist Day School in 1938, this time under the guardianship of his uncle, Mr. Abodunrin Akande, and his paternal grandmother, Madam Olatoun Ajile, as his parents were still based in Ghana. He completed his primary education at this school in 1943 and went back to Ghana to join his parents. He completed his secondary education at Adisadel College in 1949, receiving a very good grade on the London Matriculation Examination as well as on the Cambridge School Certificate Examination.

Tragically, his mother died in 1948, and his father decided to return to his hometown of Awe with his four sisters. This nearly brought an abrupt end to his secondary education if Alhaji Shittu Olopoenia had not opted to be his guardian for the remaining period of his studies. The Baptist Mission in Ghana, under Reverend W. N. Claxon, also offered him a scholarship so he could complete his education. However, the scholarship was conditional: after the completion of his education, he was to serve the Baptist Mission as a teacher in one of their schools in Ghana. As a result, in 1949 he was appointed a teacher in the Baptist Mission School in Suhum, a town in the southern part of Ghana.

While serving as a teacher with the Baptist Mission, he felt the urge to go into the ministry. He returned to Nigeria and enrolled in the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho in 1952 to be trained as a Baptist minister. At the seminary, Akande was a brilliant and popular student. From 1952 to 1955, he was elected editor of the seminary's magazine, *Theologue*. He also participated in sports, having been a good athlete since primary school. He completed his theological education with a bachelor's degree in theology in December of 1955.

In 1959, while serving as pastor of First Baptist Church, Fiditi in Oyo State of Nigeria, the Nigerian Baptist Convention awarded him a scholarship to study in the U.S.A. In America, he attended Wayland Baptist College—now Wayland Baptist University—and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, from 1959 to 1962. He obtained a B. A. in English from Wayland and a bachelor of divinity degree from SBTS. He returned to Nigeria in 1962 and worked briefly

with some Baptist churches as a pastor. In 1969, he went back to the United States on a scholarship from Union Theological Seminary in New York, for his postgraduate studies. He completed an M.A. in New Testament there in 1970, and went on to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for his Ph.D. in New Testament, which he completed in 1973.

Marital Life

While Akande worked as a teacher with the Baptist Mission in Ghana, he had certain opportunities that positively influenced his life. First, it was during that time that he met Miss Comfort Olalonpe Kehinde, the lady who later became his wife. He met her on his first day at Suhum, and during their stay together in the area, they developed a relationship that culminated in their marriage on December 13, 1956. The marriage was blessed with five god-fearing children who presently hold various responsible positions. Akande's achievements could not have been realized without the prayerful support, devotion, and unwavering faith of his wife, who believes that the duty of a Christian wife is to support her husband in prayer. His wife has been a continual source of courage and encouragement to him.

Pastoral Ministry

Another opportunity that arose during his stay in Suhum launched him into the Gospel ministry. As a teacher in a Baptist Mission School, Akande was also involved in church activities. In 1951, he met the late Rev. J. T. Ayorinde from Nigeria, who later became the first indigenous general secretary of the Nigerian Baptist Convention. This meeting happened during a Baptist convention at Tamale, in Ghana. One of the sermons preached at the convention by Dr. Ayorinde was entitled "Preaching the Gospel Around," and this sermon had a great influence on Akande. After the sermon, he felt the urge to go into the ministry, so he met the speaker and told him that he would like to join the ministry. The reverend gentleman gave him all the support he needed, and he returned to Nigeria in 1952 to enter the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho.

After graduating from seminary, Akande was engaged to pastor the First Baptist Church, in Fiditi, Nigeria. While serving at this church he was ordained as a full gospel minister on October 13, 1957. Akande commanded great respect in that church and the youths of the town saw him as a role model. He was at

Fiditi until 1959 when he won a scholarship to study in the U.S.A. Returning to Nigeria from America in 1962, Akande secured a pastoral job at Ago-Owu Baptist Church in Abeokuta, where he had a successful and memorable ministry that lasted four years. During his four years of pastoral leadership at Ago-Owu Baptist Church, the church witnessed tremendous spiritual and numerical growth.

Before his appointment, some members had been accused of being members of the Ogboni Fraternity, a notable secret cult in the southwest of Nigeria. These people had been excommunicated from the church by his predecessor, but when Akande became pastor of the church, he decided to recall them. He invited the affected members back into the church, thinking that they could be counseled, with the help of the Scriptures, to see the evil effect of cultism in their Christian life. His effort yielded a positive result, and these men later renounced their membership of the cult, living instead for the Lord Jesus Christ and dying committed to his cause. In all, Akande served the Ago-Owu Baptist Church in his capacity as pastor from 1962 to 1965, a period of three years.

Leaving the Ago-Owu Baptist Church in December of 1965, he moved to the Ebenezer Baptist Church on Campbell Street, in Lagos, where he resumed work in January of 1966. At the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Akande was known for his sermons against Christian membership in the Ogboni cult. At the time, membership in secret societies was a serious menace to the churches, as some members still preferred to have one leg in the church and another in the cult. However, Akande's sermons became quite popular in Lagos in this regard, and churches of other denominations, such as the Methodists and the Anglicans, invited him on various occasions to deliver sermons. In the mid and late 1960s, his name became a household name among Christians in Lagos. He was a regular guest preacher on the television and radio stations in Lagos and Ibadan. He was so loved and so highly respected that many elderly people told him, and their children, that he must officiate and deliver the sermon at their funeral. Young couples who were planning their weddings were besieging his office to consult his engagement diary before scheduling dates for their weddings, because they wanted him to officiate and to deliver a sermon. It was a great period in Akande's life, and he had to adjust to his newfound position as a busy minister of the gospel who was in high demand.

In 1969, while serving as pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, he secured another scholarship from Union Theological Seminary in America for his postgraduate studies in New Testament. He was in America from August of 1969 to December of 1973, completing his Masters and Ph.D. programs. Returning

to Nigeria in December of 1973, Akande taught at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomosho. He served as an associate professor at the seminary until December of 1976, when he was invited to become pastor of the Oritamefa Baptist Church in Ibadan.

Although his stay at the Oritamefa Baptist Church was quite brief, the Lord blessed his ministry during those years, and the membership increased tremendously. The Sunday worship services were well attended by both Baptists and non-Baptists, and it was reported that the church was always filled, to the extent that worshippers who arrived at the church after 9:30 a.m. usually did not get seats. Some would stand throughout the worship service and some would sit with members of the choir, while others would sit on the rostrum around the pulpit just to be able to worship on Sunday and listen to Akande's sermons. To make his sermons available to members of the church and other interested members of the public, he introduced a unique tape recording ministry, which flourished tremendously. The Sunday sermons were recorded and made available to interested members for a modest fee. He also introduced the printing of these sermons, which were always distributed to worshippers on the following Sunday. All of these factors contributed greatly to the spiritual growth of the members during his tenure as pastor of the church. As a courageous and fearless preacher, his sermons against membership in secret cults, for which he was known in Lagos, continued at the Oritamefa Baptist Church. During one of those sermons on a Sunday in 1977, an eyewitness gave the following vivid account:

The church was packed full. The media, both electronic and print, was highly represented. It is even possible that members of the secret cults were themselves present. Some members were afraid of what might happen to their pastor, given the viciousness with which cultists were known to have dealt with persons, including some pastors, who openly divulged their secrets. After the choir special, Dr. Akande mounted the pulpit. The whole atmosphere was charged. Anxiety filled the whole sanctuary. He fired on, exposing their secrets, denouncing the evil of cultism and then gave invitation. It was in the news all over town. Of course, he was threatened later and told that he would die within seven days!¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Victor O. Durodola, "Rev. Dr. S. T. Ola Akande: An Accomplished Administrator" in Ademola Ishola and Deji Ayegboyan (eds.), *Ecclesiastes, The Preacher, The Church and the Contemporary Society: Papers in Honour of Rev. Dr. S. T. Ola Akande, Ph.D at 80*, (Ibadan: Sceptre Prints Limited, 2006), 530.

This “prediction” came to nothing because Akande lived for forty-three years thereafter and died in the year 2020.

Leadership of the Nigerian Baptist Convention

From March 1977 through April 1979, Akande served as the president of the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and in April of 1979, he was appointed general secretary. As a reformer and an agent of change, he was determined to leave his mark as a facilitator of positive development in the Nigerian Baptist Convention. His tenure witnessed giant strides in administrative innovations and spiritual development.

(a) Staff Motivation and Welfare

Staff motivation and welfare was high on his agenda. First, he introduced a special and periodical “Appreciation Service”, for church pastors who had served any Baptist Church or the Convention for a period of five years or more. These services, over the years, have served as a source of encouragement to ministers in their work. Congregations have also been using the occasion of such services to really show appreciation to their pastors by presenting them with valuable gifts, written citations, and certificates. Realizing that there was also a need to appreciate retired ministers, he introduced the awarding of “Certificates of Meritorious Services” to ministers of the Nigerian Baptist Convention who have retired from the services of the Convention after years of meritorious service. Prominent among the certificates introduced at the time was a certificate for “Excellence for growth in church membership, baptism, and founding of new churches.” He introduced this in collaboration with Rev. R. L. Locke, the Southern Baptist missionary with whom he also co-founded the Oke-Bola Baptist Church. He also introduced Certificates of Merit to the first one hundred churches on the Honor Roll in their cooperative giving to the Convention. These presentations served to recognize work well done and to help to motivate ministers and members to do greater work. They also resulted in the expansion of Baptist work in Nigeria during Akande's tenure as general secretary.

He introduced a new self-administered pension scheme to the Convention, which enabled retired Baptist personnel to collect reasonable gratuities at retirement and enabled their gratuities to be paid in record time. To forestall the exodus of pastors from the Convention into the civil and teaching services, he set up a Salary Review Committee to review pastors' salaries,

recommending to the committee that they present generous proposals that would be in line with the salaries of civil servants. This great achievement was complemented by the preparation, for the first time within the Convention, of a “Booklet on the Conditions of Service for Workers of the NBC.” As a result, the salary scale for pastors became equivalent to that of salary scales for civil service, and the exodus of personnel from the Convention was reduced. It would therefore not be an exaggeration to say that his tenure resulted in better salary structures and improved conditions of service for Baptist pastors and workers.

(b) Evangelism and Church Growth

Akande loved evangelism, and before his appointment as general secretary of the NBC, he was involved in many church planting activities. He was a co-founder, with Southern Baptist missionary Rev. R. L. Locke, of the Oke-Bola Baptist Church, Ibadan (English Speaking), which was later renamed New Reservation Area Baptist Church, and was its honorary pastor from 1979 to 1989. He also co-founded the University of Ibadan Baptist Church, with Professor J. T. Okedola. Apart from contributing to church growth, the motivation which he gave to pastors and members alike led to the expansion of Baptist ministry in Nigeria. Specifically, there was a phenomenal increase in Baptist churches and preaching stations, which went from about two to three thousand. The Student Ministries department was also established during his time as Convention secretary. Correspondingly, the Convention started to assume an increasing financial responsibility for student ministry, which helped to foster this arm of the Convention as students were ministered to, cared for, and integrated into the life of the church.

(c) Contribution to Education

Akande was instrumental to the establishment of the department of Religious Studies at Ahmadu Bello University, in Zaria. In 1984, the university approached the executive committee of the NBC about its intention to open a department of Christian Religious Studies, stipulating that the Convention should provide a teacher to head the department and pay a salary for two years. Akande worked assiduously to fulfill this condition, and the department was opened. He also used his position as regional secretary for Africa of the Baptist World Alliance to assist the newly created department to arrange for theological books for its library. Through his influence, 948 theological books were sent to the department from

the Baptist World Alliance in America. As the general secretary of the NBC, Akande helped promote intellectualism within the Convention by contributing to the education of many pastors and young students, encouraging a good number of them to further their studies. To make this easier, he matched this encouragement with action by pursuing and securing scholarships for many of them. In 1980, he initiated an exchange program between the NBC and Quachita Baptist University in Arkansas, U.S.A. This program gave many pastors of the NBC the opportunity of overseas studies. Those who benefited from these programs will never forget his great contribution to their lives in this area.

(d) Contribution to Economic Development

Before his appointment as general secretary of the NBC, many properties of the Baptist Mission and of the Convention had been compulsorily acquired by the government. On his assumption of office, he fought relentlessly to get compensation for some of these properties, and it was through his relentless effort that the NBC was able to secure an allocation of land at Abuja, the new Nigerian Federal Capital territory.

An Accomplished Author

Akande was an accomplished and educated author who sought to educate the masses through his many publications. His book “The Courage to Live,” published in 1986 by Macmillan Publishers, Nigeria Limited, is a masterpiece. It contains admonitions on how to advance through life courageously, living a life that is worthwhile. The home was another area of special interest to him, and some of his books offer encouragement and admonition to couples on how to sustain their marriages, manage their homes, and bring up their children in the fear of God.

He was also an anti-corruption crusader, and some of his works deal with the evil practices of corruption, greed, and excessive love for money which have remained a recurring problem within our society and which have been a bane to the progress of our nation economically, politically, educationally, and socially. Some of his published works include: *Marriage and Home-Making in Nigerian Society* (1971); *What to do when Someone Dies: A Handbook of Information for Families in the Crisis of Death* (1976); *Common Family Problems: Advice and Counsel on Eight Problems in Family Life* (1977); and *An Invitation to become One Family in God: A Study of the Ephesian Epistle* (1977), which are

published by the Daystar Press, Ibadan. Others are: *The Doctrine of Eschatology: Its Relevance to our Present Day Evangelistic Programme* (1974); *Prevent a Divorce in Your Marriage* (1981); and *For Better, For Worse* (1986), all published by the Baptist Press, Ibadan.

Ecumenical Involvements

Akande held many positions within the body of Christ, both at home and abroad. On the home front, he was a member of the Translation Committee of the Bible Society of Nigeria from 1980 to 1991; a member of the Standing Committee of the Christian Council of Nigeria, 1976 to 1991; and president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Oyo State Chapter, 1985 to 1990. He was also appointed by the Federal Government of Nigeria to be a member of the Panel on the Implications of Nigeria's membership in the Organization of [the] Islamic Council (OIC) in 1986, and the Advisory Council of Religious Affairs, from 1987 to 1989. As a contribution towards religious peace in Nigeria, he was co-founder in 1990, with Alhaji Abdul Azeez Arisekola Alao, a Nigerian Muslim leader and a staunch promoter of the Muslim faith, of an organization called The Christian/Muslim Peace Movement of Nigeria.

He held the following appointments at the international level: member, International Society for the Study of the New Testament (SNTS) 1977; member, Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, from 1977 to 1983 and 1984 to 1991; member, Central Committee of the World Council of Churches; member, General Council of the Baptist World Alliance, 1978 to 1992; general secretary/treasurer of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship, and Baptist World Alliance regional secretary for Africa, 1982 to 1992.

National Honor

In December 2003, Akande was awarded the national honor of the Order of Member of the Federal Republic by the Federal Government of Nigeria in appreciation of his many social, political, cultural, and religious contributions to Nigerian Society. In 2018, he was honored by the Oyo State Government of Nigeria. The popular Bashorun-Ashi, Bodija Road, Ibadan, Oyo State was named after him for his contributions to the development of the state and Nigeria, hence the road is now known as Rev. S. T. Ola Akande Way. In his remarks, the state commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, Mr. Bimbo Kolade, who delivered the message of Governor Abiola Ajimobi at

the program said government recognized Akande's efforts in nation building—hence the need to name the Bashorun-Ashi-Bodija Road, Ibadan after him.

Personal Qualities

Akande was a multi-faceted man: a gifted, courageous, and fearless preacher; an astute and tireless pastor; a forthright theologian; an able and accomplished administrator; a committed and uncompromising leader, and an unwavering Christian. He was a loving husband to his wife and a dutiful father to his children. He was a man of honor, integrity, and the fear of the Lord, and a gospel minister of no mean achievement, who was an agent of positive changes in his own time. The luster and pride he brought to bear on the Nigerian Baptist Convention in particular, and to the Christian faith in general, is considerable. It is no wonder that the entire 1977 Master of Divinity class of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, who reviewed the activities and performance of Nigerian Baptist leaders, concluded the following: "Though controversial while in office and out of office, yet S. T. Ola Akande is the best Nigerian Baptist leader ever produced."

Conclusion

Akande served the Baptist communities in Nigeria from 1952, when he answered the call into the ministry, to his retirement from the exalted office of General Secretary in 1991, a period of forty years. During this time, he served as pastor, church administrator, seminary teacher, president and lastly General Secretary of the NBC for twelve years. Many Baptists witnessed to the fact that he brought the NBC many steps forward to greatness during those twelve years.

Akande passed away at his residence in Ibadan on September 10, 2020, according to a statement released by his family. He is survived by his wife of sixty-four years, Comfort Olalonpe, five children and five grandchildren.

Michael Adeleke Ogunewu

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Egbeyemi, Olaseni O. and S. T. Ola Akande, *Agent of Change*. Ibadan: GLJ General Services Ltd., 1996.

Ishola, Ademola and Deji Ayegboyin (eds.). *Ecclesiastes, The Preacher, the Church and Contemporary Society: Papers in honour of Rev. Dr. S. T. Ola Akande, Ph.D. at 80*. Ibadan: Sceptre Prints Limited, 2006.

This article, received in 2010, revised in 2021 was researched and written by Dr. Michael Adeleke Ogunewu under the supervision of Rev. Dr. Deji Ayegboyin, University of Ibadan, *DACB* liaison coordinator and member of the Senior Advisory Council (2020-). You can read it on the *DACB* website at <https://dacb.org/stories/nigeria/akande-samuel/>.

African Christian Biography Serialized:¹⁰¹

Jan Tzatzoe or Dyani Tshatshu: Personal, Political, and Historical Consequences of Naming in African History

By Roger S. Levine

“Oh, you mean, Tshatshu,” the middle-aged man stated emphatically. He emphasized and then drew out each syllable in a deeply resonant manner that I had not heard before: Tsh-aaa Tsh-uuu.¹⁰²

“Of course, I know who *he* was.”

Our conversation had begun a few minutes earlier. In the winter of 2011 I had found my way to Grahamstown, in South Africa’s Eastern Cape, for the National Arts Festival. I had been invited to present my recently published book, *A Living Man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary, and the Making of Nineteenth-Century South Africa*. The book tells the story of Jan Tzatzoe, an African leader and intermediary who flourished in the European colonial world of the missionary Reverend Read, who helped raise him from boyhood, and the African world of his father, Kote Tzatzoe, chief of the amaNtinde lineage of the Xhosa state, to whose people he eventually returned.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Roger S. Levine, “Jan Tzatzoe or Dyani Tshatshu: Personal, Political, and Historical Consequences of Naming in African History,” in *African Christian Biography: Stories, Lives, and Challenges*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2018).

¹⁰² My thanks to Jonathan J. Bonk and Dana L. Robert and the other organizers of the African Christian Biography Conference, to my fellow participants in the conference, and to Dana Robert for her comments on the revisions of this chapter.

¹⁰³ Roger S. Levine, *A Living Man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary, and the Making of Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2010). For further information on Tzatzoe, in particular his evangelistic and diplomatic work, see Roger S. Levine, “Cultural Innovation and Translation in the Eastern Cape: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Intellectual, and the Making of an African Gospel, 1817–1833,” *African Historical Review* 42, no. 2 (2010): 84–101, and “An Interpreter Will Arise: Resurrecting Jan Tzatzoe’s Diplomatic and Evangelical Contributions as a Cultural Intermediary on South Africa’s Eastern Cape Frontier, 1816–1818,” in *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees and the Making of Colonial Africa*, ed. Benjamin N. Lawrance, Emily Lynn Osborn, and Richard L. Roberts (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 37–55.

Born into a Xhosa royal family around 1792 in South Africa, Tzatzoe interacted with both worlds as a missionary, diplomat, chief, and ambassador on the colonial, metropolitan, and imperial stages, including a highly publicized and controversial evangelical and political journey to Great Britain in 1836–37. He witnessed the advent and imposition of colonialism in South Africa. By the 1860s, despite his determined resistance, Tzatzoe was an oppressed subject of harsh British colonial rule. During this period of fervent cultural and political appropriation and contestation, he embodied African participation in several crucial issues of the colonial encounter: the hybrid nature of the selves, or identities, being fashioned in the interstitial and contingent space of the frontier; the coalescing of European and African religious thought and culture; the redefinition of African political authority; the construction of a colonial state apparatus and racial ideology; and humanitarian and African resistance to this construction.

To say that I was frazzled would be understating matters. It had been only a few days before that I had been told that I would not be presenting to the general festival audience, but instead to a Wordfest audience, a large group of local, isiXhosa-speakers, writers, and intellectuals. The morning had begun with high spirits, but by the time I made my way toward the auditorium for my talk that afternoon, intense storms or perhaps the inscrutable whims of ESKOM (South Africa's public electrical utility) had knocked out power on the Rhodes University campus. This turn of events threatened not just my PowerPoint slides, but the presentation itself due to lack of lighting in the lecture halls. I arrived to find my talk delayed, and the real highlight of the timeslot, Jonathan Shapiro, a.k.a. the cartoonist Zapiro, declaiming at the top of his voice, Pope-like, from a first story balcony down towards an audience that took up most of the ground floor atrium and flowed up the stairway itself.

I skirted the crowd and made my way up to the lecture hall to await the return of electricity or the “all clear” to forge ahead regardless. I could see that the auditorium was mostly full already and was collecting my thoughts, when my interlocutor found me. He held a copy of my book and was pointing at the cover, which features a stylized engraving from an 1836 painting of Jan Tzatzoe.

“Who is this person here?” he asked, adding, “We do not know this person.” He pointed specifically at the title of the book. “This is not a Xhosa name! Why are you saying he is Xhosa?”

“No, you see, he was a Xhosa,” I answered. “His name was Dyani Tshatshu. Of the amaTshatshus.”

“Oh, you mean Tsh-aaa Tsh-uuu,” he replied.

In the remainder of this chapter, I wish to explore fully both the choices I made in writing and presenting my research findings that led to the moment described above and the personal, historical, and political consequences that flowed from those choices. While I by no means wish to suggest that my experience and choices are illustrative of the experience of other scholars and writers, I do offer this personal account with the hope that elements of it may resonate with others and inform their choices or at least allow them to anticipate better the consequences and unintended meanings their work may ignite. The issues raised by my experience do not provoke the kind of questions that have answers or for which an academic argument may be framed. But they do place me, and I hope others, into a space of reflection—a space in which emotions and unconscious motivations come to the fore. These issues are especially compelling in the context of this volume’s focus on the biographical elements of African studies, African history, and African Christianity—the “possibilities and perils” of engaging with individual lives and individual life stories. More so perhaps than other work in African history that integrates individual lives into larger groups (which then can be analyzed with reference to class, gender, race, and such rubrics), biographies develop—and, yes, appropriate—in-depth lives and stories with specific, tangible, local contexts and meanings. Biographers do so to appeal to multiple audiences, both local and global, and they can find their work being received in unexpected settings.

Motivations

I found the historical figure who became central to my book in the pages of Noël Mostert’s magisterial 1992 *Frontiers*, where he appears as Dyani Tshatshu.¹⁰⁴ Even to someone familiar with isiXhosa or with Nguni languages more broadly, Dyani is an unusual name and certainly not a familiar one. Once I began to examine the archival record for traces of Dyani Tshatshu, the situation became cloudier. The archival record speaks of a Jan Tsatsoe or Jan Tzatzoe and, toward the end of his life (starting around the 1850s), of a Jan Tshatshu. It remains unclear whether “Jan” was a transcription of the isiXhosa, Dyani, or what seems more plausible to me, that Dyani was a transcription back into isiXhosa of the Dutch/Afrikaans name, Jan. The first syllables of both names are pronounced similarly. The isiXhosa pronunciation that starting in the 1850s and through to

¹⁰⁴ Noël Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa’s Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London: Pimlico, 1992).

the present day is transcribed as “Tshatshu” was recorded prior to the mid-nineteenth century as Tzatzoe or Tsatsoe. This background to the issue of naming should illustrate the basic choice I made in my text. I elected to use only one of the many transcriptions of my Tzatzoe/Tshatshu’s name. Fundamentally, I chose to value the archival or nineteenth-century persona.¹⁰⁵

I chose to utilize “Jan Tzatzoe” exclusively in my text for one specifically compelling reason, which I will mention shortly. I also did it for the sake of consistency. But at heart I knew I was choosing to do my best to resurrect an archival character to compete, in a sense, with British colonial leaders and governors of the Cape such as Sir Benjamin D’Urban or Sir Harry Smith, or with Christian exemplars such as the Reverend James Read or Dr. James Philip, whose lives have been developed in multiple biographical presentations. I had found enough in the archival record to suggest that I could build up a portrait of an African, an African Christian, and an African leader with sufficient depth and nuance—with as many pigments and viscosities of paint, as it were—to rival the portrayals or characterizations of Europeans from the period. My choice was confirmed by the fact that I had found practically nothing in the oral record. Finding a rich vein there might have pushed me more in the direction of utilizing “Dyani Tshatshu.”

Looking back, I also realize that while Tzatzoe participated and performed on a global stage—living in-between and in movement—toward the end of his life and in his after life, Tshatshu lived affixed to place. But in choosing to illuminate and enliven the archival and global Jan Tzatzoe, had I unconsciously diminished Dyani Tshatshu? Was I rendering him at an even greater remove from the living tradition in which he remains embedded? Was I also unconsciously

¹⁰⁵. Even the choice of the words historians, scholars, and writers opt to use as they describe and analyze those about whom they write may carry unintended consequences. I used the descriptor “persona” just now after noticing how burdened my other choices—“character” or “subject”—might be. Persona is certainly a jarring choice and not one with which I am content. “Character” might perhaps be the most accurate term for describing my work, given that I presented Tzatzoe/Tshatshu in text and in relationship to other characters. But “character” elevates the role of the author and diminishes for some the potential historical accuracy of the portrayal. It nudges reflection closer to the line between historical fiction and history, especially historical biography, whose boundaries my work set out to test. “Subject,” which is likely the most conventional choice, intimates a degree of mastery of sources and motivations that will make biographers, I imagine, feel deeply uncomfortable. And that is to speak only of the connotations of a “subject” as an intellectual exercise one might master.

claiming and conveying to readers and audiences a degree of control or ownership over his life and persona that was actually diametrically opposed to my conscious intentions?¹⁰⁶

A Turn toward Biography

Lisa Lindsay illuminates these issues in a podcast, published in September 2015 by the *Africa Past and Present* series from Michigan State, on her soon-to-be-published book *Atlantic Bonds*.¹⁰⁷ She speaks compellingly of undertaking a biographical approach to African and Atlantic world history. She agrees with her interviewer, Peter Limb, that there appears to be a turn toward the biographical in African or trans-African studies. Why might this be? First, Lindsay argues that biography enables the reader—and for the purposes of this chapter, the author—to identify more closely and, importantly, in a more emotional fashion with the historical content and concerns at hand. Second, biography compels the reader—and author or historian—to follow a trail through the past, which almost certainly will lead in directions and unveil territory that are beyond one’s initial ability to ascertain or predict. Hence, the advice is given to PhD students (ignored, I hope successfully, by me) to avoid biography at all costs for their dissertation projects. What if the life or lives in which one invests oneself lead in uninteresting or unhistoriographical directions? I confess that my initial interest in Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu did not necessarily lie in the Christian or religious aspects of his life, although I am grateful that he did lead me toward African Christianity.

Lindsay’s comments are helpful in unpacking my naming decision and its consequences. As I mentioned above, my use of Jan Tzatzoe, rather than Dyani

¹⁰⁶. My thanks to Dana Robert for the lens of local and global. The classic text that calls these archival and appropriative issues into question is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Education, 1988), 271–313. For a nuanced reading of this debate with specific regard to the South African archive and the writing of history in postapartheid South Africa, see Premesh Lalu, *The Deaths of Hintsa: Postapartheid South Africa and the Shape of Recurring Pasts* (Cape Town: HSRC, 2009). See also, Levine, “Introduction,” in *A Living Man*, 1–6, and esp. 198n4.

¹⁰⁷. Lisa A. Lindsay, “Episode 93: Atlantic Bonds and Biography: From South Carolina to Nigeria,” *Africa Past and Present*, podcast, accessed September 2015, <http://afripod.aodl.org/2015/09/>. Lisa A. Lindsay, *Atlantic Bonds: A Nineteenth-Century Odyssey from America to Africa* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2017).

Tshatshu, provided me with a mostly unconscious identification or affiliation with an archival and global persona. Looking back, I must have felt that I could bring Jan Tzatzoe more fully to life than I might have been able to enliven Dyani Tshatshu. Tzatzoe was present in records with which I was familiar; he participated in conversations, controversies, and triumphs alongside other archival figures with whom I was familiar and to whom I could relate more closely than with the interactions of Tshatshu and other amaXhosa leaders. Crucially as well, Jan Tzatzoe inhabited an unbounded world, one in which his fate had not been proscribed yet, one that held immense possibilities. Jan Tzatzoe traveled to Cape Town and to England, met the King's grandchildren, compared the mountains of Scotland with those of Xhosaland, and attempted to forge peace between the British and the Xhosa in several wars. Dyani Tshatshu did these things too, but his world and the worlds of his descendants were shuttered. Tzatzoe's life was lived in the present; Tshatshu's possibilities lay in the past.

This identification or emotional connection became central to me as I completed my research and created various drafts of my manuscript. Tzatzoe's story had hooked me almost immediately, but not because of the relevance of his life to academic or historical debates. There was something else there that, frankly, I still cannot articulate or rationalize. The best I can do is to say that I foresaw the promise of a romantic story, a tragic one, to be sure, but one filled with the pathos of those who remain marginal or in-between, as I myself have been, moving between South Africa and the United States.

“This Book Should Be Banned”

Back in Grahamstown, when the lights came back on, I presented my book and its findings to the Wordfest audience. Then the proceedings were opened up for a question-and-answer session. The details remain foggy—and as a historian, I wish I had taken notes immediately—but what stayed with me was one audience member's insistence that “this book should be banned.” While he was quickly calmed by other members of the audience who defended my right to write about Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu and who thanked me for presenting my findings and for having invested time in researching their ancestor, there was an emotional charge in the room. Would the confrontation have been avoided if I had made an initial decision to use the name Tshatshu or if I had been able to present my findings in isiXhosa? I am not sure, but the sense that a significant segment of the audience felt that I had inappropriately appropriated their history was palpable:

“What gives you the right to take this history?”

“Why are you calling him Jan Tzatzoe?”
“Why have we never heard of him before?”
“This is an insult to the Xhosa nation!”¹⁰⁸

I do not wish to misrepresent my experience. I felt much support in the room as well, and a good deal of mediation was occurring between the two sides of the audience. But the experience brought out reactions and emotions that may well be present but not confronted head-on in other biographical and scholarly contexts. Then again, the depth of feeling might be exceptional to the Eastern Cape with its extraordinarily violent and disruptive colonial history, as well as to amaXhosa intellectual and literary engagement.¹⁰⁹

In my responses to the questions, I remember emphasizing two points. First, if I had done my job well, I hoped that I had demonstrated just how interesting and notable a life Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu had led. I hoped that I had shown how many and varied are the archival sources available for others to attempt their own studies of his life as well as the lives of his contemporaries and of this fascinating time and place in the history of the Eastern Cape and South Africa. For, I stated, it is through multiple narratives and other characterizations that we can engage best with these issues. Second, I stated that I felt more comfortable employing “Jan Tzatzoe” exclusively because I had found many examples of his name signed in that fashion (one of which I had on a PowerPoint slide). Indeed, these signatures are the only pieces of evidence I found that I think are definitively in Tzatzoe/Tshatshu’s hand. It is now clear, certainly, that Tzatzoe/Tshatshu would have expected his name to have been pronounced by modern English speakers with a “tsh” sound, rather than a “zah” sound, despite the transcription.

The signature gave me a solid, rational, conscious hook on which to hang my choice of the archival persona. Looking back, I see that it confirmed many of the unconscious motivations behind my narrative and authorial choices. It cast Tzatzoe/Tshatshu as an intellectual, as a man engaging with the education and literacy being presented by the European missionaries with whom he

¹⁰⁸. Wilhelmina Maboja, “A Xhosa Idiom Brought to Life,” *Wordstock*, July 6, 2011, 4. One audience member described the book as an “insult to the Xhosa nation,” not having been written by a Xhosa.”

¹⁰⁹. I am reminded of an apocryphal story from the University of the Western Cape history department in which Jeff Peires was shouted down by an audience of largely isiXhosa-speaking students when he described archival evidence that proved that Sir George Grey had not directly orchestrated the great Cattle Killing as a plot.

associated. I was able to construe him as a man trying to create a new persona for himself in the evolving global colonial world of the early nineteenth century. Likely I was overselling this world to myself. The restrictive, oppressive world of the mid-nineteenth century—one that sees Tzatzoe/Tshatshu petition for his lost lands as a colonial subject and do so in the official record as “Jan Tshatshu”—was a world I was less interested in exploring.

The process of privileging that I undertook—and of which I became more aware largely because of the Wordfest audience—speaks deeply and directly to the issue of audience in biography. In a sense, I was forced into a choice (given the multiple transcriptions in the archival and contemporary record) that other biographers and scholars make more implicitly. To my initial interlocutor and some in the audience, the choice was obvious. I had written for other academics, for “white” or “colonial” readers, and for my own material gain (this observation occurred only in discussing these events subsequently with others).¹¹⁰ This crucial dilemma is one that I am not sure has any answers. Could I have created a text that took as its first responsibility the audience in that room at Rhodes University? And then, assuredly, built outwards toward the other audiences, both popular and scholarly, that one anticipates as a scholar? What would that look like? Would it involve an isiXhosa text? An oral component? Or simply a reordering in the author’s own mind of the project’s intent and goals?

Reconsiderations

Again, I return to emotions and unconscious motivations. I would argue that an incredible arrogance is required on the part of any historian, but especially a biographer, who tells a historical story. One must have a compelling belief in one’s own historical tool kit, in the breadth and depth of the sources one has acquired (has every avenue been exhausted?), and conversely, in the seeming irrelevance of the evidence one has failed to turn up (could a document out there someplace invalidate the biographer’s fundamental contention or argument?). But most important is belief in one’s historical imagination. What gives one the right and capacity to think oneself back into the past—into the lives, thoughts, and feelings of people who are now (for most biographers) dead? And to perhaps

¹¹⁰. I am appreciative of the fact that *A Living Man* has been read and employed by writers such as Mcebisi Ndletyana (see note 10 below) and Xolela Mangcu, *Biko: A Life* (London: Tauris, 2014). These issues have returned recently in the form of academic and popular protestors’ calling for a “decolonization” of the South African curriculum.

state the obvious: what gives a “white,” secular, South African-American of Jewish descent the right or capacity to think himself into, to merge himself with, a man like Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu? The compelling fiction in one’s mind that maintains this arrogance and sustains this ability hour after hour, day after day, year after year during these projects is a powerful mental construct. While fundamentally necessary and appropriate to the task, it is also largely hidden to ourselves until it is bared in a truly shocking fashion.

I cannot fully appreciate how it must feel to have someone whom one considers to be an outsider present one with a history of one’s own people, drawn from a set of sources that one potentially cannot access due to decades of overt educational and material discrimination. But I am left with a feeling of sadness. Who owns this history? How must it feel not to have access to these forms of knowledge? How can we address these concerns? In the end, Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu belongs to at least two communities, and the tension occasioned by the varying claims of ownership is not resolvable. One hopes, however, that it might function in a productive fashion moving forward.

Would I redo my choice given the chance and change every occurrence of “Tzatzoe” to “Tshatshu” in the text of *A Living Man*? In the initial aftermath of the presentation in Grahamstown, I decided that I very much would. But when Yale University Press unexpectedly approached me a couple of years later with a plan to produce a paperback edition of the text, I passed on the opportunity to ask whether such a change was within their editorial capabilities. I hesitated at the impracticality of the request (would it not create an entirely different book or, at best, a true second edition rather than a paperback version?). Even shifting just the subtitle from “Jan Tzatzoe” to “Jan Tshatshu” or to the unwieldy but more accurate “Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu” would have led to this issue. But I also realized that I needed to stick with the defensible choices I had made and the explanations I provided in the text. Perhaps if I ever publish a true second edition I can append a version of this chapter to my original text, but for now I must address these concerns in other formats.

Conclusion

Two notes and a comment by way of conclusion. I had not heard much from South Africa when, in early 2013, Mcebisi Ndletyana published a piece in the *Sunday Independent* that used my account of Jan Tzatzoe (not amending the name) to reflect on Jacob Zuma’s pronouncements about “clever blacks” and “black mimicry of whites” and to argue for a renewed sense of cultural hybridity

and non-racialism.¹¹¹ The latest act in my little story came as quite a surprise in the form of an email that reached me while I was sketching out this chapter in July 2015. While it did not diminish the impasses and dilemmas I hope I have illuminated as worthy of attention, it did provide a welcome balance to the story and to my own emotional response to it.

From: Nosipho Salman

To: rlevine@sewanee.edu

A LIVING MAN FROM AFRICA JAN TZATSOE

Good Day Prof

My name is Nosipho Salman, the grand-granddaughter of Chief Jan Tshatshu. I appreciate the great work you have done. Its new generation that is concerned on what was happening to our great-great Chief of Amantinde., our family was not enlightened by that time. I do what I can to make South Africa, especially the Eastern Cape to recognised this poor man as a hero. I forwarded a request to Department of Arts and Culture and Traditional Affairs to re-vitalised and rebuilt his grave, the re-naming of his town (King William's Town) to be Jan Tzatsoe.

The history you gave us in your book is the one that our parents left with us, but it was not in writing it was difficult to make references. I need your support in this project, currently I'm collecting all the relevant data for submission to the heads of the departments.

I humble request your assistants on the period Chief Jan Tzatsoe stayed in England (for a period of 2 years), and bought a land for his family.

Thanking you in advance.

Kind Regards¹¹²

¹¹¹. Mcebisi Ndletyana, "Mistrust Behind Cultural Hostility," *Sunday Independent*, January 27, 2013.

¹¹². Nosipho Salman to Roger S. Levine, e-mail, July 20, 2015. I wish to thank Ms. Salman for permission to quote her email.

To have Jan Tzatzoe/Dyani Tshatshu feature so prominently in the public or political realm was an unexpected validation. It was gratifying to hear that the work had resonated in the public realm in this way and that it might contribute to the ongoing debate around the renaming of prominent geographical and infrastructural elements of South Africa. The shift from King William's Town to eTshatshu, or something similar, would be monumental indeed and would represent a profound and appropriate reappropriation of nineteenth-century colonial history. Best of all, in Nosipho Salman's email I see the colonial Jan Tzatzoe and the living Chief Tshatshu present alongside the figure of Jan Tzatzoe. The three join together (a trinity of sorts) to form a greater whole and, perhaps, to begin to heal the wounds of the past.

Teaching with the DACB: Reflections of a Student

Since 2019, the DACB project has benefited from the help of student researchers funded by the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program at Boston University. They have contributed to the daily work of the DACB while also furthering their academic growth by pursuing individual research projects. Students have written short biographies or collected memories, created annotated bibliographies and researched supplementary resources. For all of them, working for the DACB has opened their eyes to a new understanding of global Christianity—in particular, African Christianity. They also learn about new historical methodologies and narratives, as demonstrated in the following essay.

* * *

Women of Action *and* Women of Faith: An Undergraduate’s Perspective on Writing Biography Using a Historical and a Religious Lens¹¹³

For my final project as a student researcher for the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, I designed a two-week college-level teaching unit on African Catholic female activism. As I examined the intersection of faith and activism, I realized that secular history texts frequently overlook the influence that religious beliefs have on the lives of those working in non-religious contexts. It is ultimately necessary to account for religious beliefs, regardless of what a figure is remembered for, in order to tell the most complete and accurate history.

In disciplines and works striving for objectivity, religion is often dealt with solely in terms of titles and affiliations. A historical account might mention a figure’s religious status in relation to their societal interactions or designated cultural role. However, unless that person is remembered for being a theologian or church leader, their personal interactions with faith are frequently downplayed or ignored.

¹¹³ Catherine Devlin is a fourth-year student at Boston University, studying history. She worked as an undergraduate researcher for the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* during the fall 2020 semester as the recipient of a research award from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (<https://www.bu.edu/urop/>). Her final research project centered around creating a college-level unit on African Catholic women’s activism intended to be part of an introductory course for a Western undergraduate audience.

Discussing religion only as it pertains to official roles or identified denominations has led to overestimates of secularization. In his 1999 article “Secularization, R.I.P.,” sociologist Rodney Stark cautions against equating decreased church attendance with decreased faith. He references Iceland, where only 2% of the population attends regular church service, but 81% believes in life after death.¹¹⁴ Future historians would be inaccurate in drawing conclusions about today’s Icelanders based on the premise that the notably low church attendance means a country without faith. In this way, studying religion only as can be proven by affiliation or title ignores religious motivations that are not confined to reportable social positioning.

Furthermore, relying only on records of official church roles to document religious history disproportionately overlooks women’s faith, since women are less likely to hold titled positions in many Christian churches. In her 1994 book *Telling Women’s Lives: the New Biography*, biographer Linda Martin-Wagner argues that women’s stories cannot be forced into the same structure as biographies of men, which measure success through external factors.¹¹⁵ Recording female stories, therefore, calls for a new methodology that accounts for a deeper exploration of private and inner lives.¹¹⁶ While a great number of notable African women lack associated secondary sources, the large quantity of primary sources available through collections such as *the Dictionary of African Christian Biography* presents a unique opportunity to explore the complex interactions between individual religious experience and social activism. To attempt to write biographies of Africans who live on a continent where, in 2020, 99.3% of the population was considered religious —without factoring in religious beliefs would be to tell a skewed and incomplete story.¹¹⁷

For my lesson plan, I selected environmentalist Wangari Maathai and feminist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as case studies of female activists who are remembered for work outside of religion, yet whose religious beliefs are

¹¹⁴ Rodney Stark, “Secularization, RIP,” *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3 (1999): 264.

¹¹⁵ Linda Wagner-Martin, *Telling Women’s Lives: The New Biography* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1994), 4–5.

¹¹⁶ Michèle Sigg, “Pointillist History and the Essential Role of Biography in the Dictionary of African Christian Biography,” in *African Christian Biography: Stories, Lives, and Challenges*, ed. by D. L. Robert (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2018).

¹¹⁷ Todd M. Johnson et al., eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020)

nonetheless significant in their identity formations and activism. Maathai was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She created the Green Belt Movement which has planted more than 51 million trees in Kenya by compensating local women to aid in re-forestation.¹¹⁸ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an award-winning novelist and outspoken feminist, whose TEDx Talk “We Should All Be Feminists” has been viewed over 6 million times on YouTube.¹¹⁹

Both women admit to the influence of religion in their lives even though neither held an official church role. Wangari Maathai’s formal connection to the Catholic Church is well-documented: she was born to a Christian family, attended St. Cecilia’s Intermediate Primary School where she converted to Catholicism, continued on to Loreto Girls Catholic High School, and later co-founded the Kenyan Debt Relief Network with the Catholic Church’s Peace and Justice Department.¹²⁰ While the Catholic Church played a large role across different stages of Maathai’s life, her relationship with it is not easily defined. For instance, in her autobiography *Unbowed* she criticizes missionaries for destroying aspects of Kikuyu culture and contributing to deforestation yet also praises their emphasis on literacy and the creation of schools and hospitals saying, “they did their work well.”¹²¹

Maathai’s nuanced view of missionaries echoes scholarly discourse regarding recent perspectives on missionary history. In his 2002 article “World Christianity and the New Historiography,” professor of World Christianity Lamin Sanneh argues that framing missionary history entirely as Westerners pushing their culture upon indigenous people perpetuates a top-down approach by describing the local people as passive recipients without agency. This portrayal is clearly inaccurate when one considers the diverse, vibrant Christian communities in Africa today, which are founded and led by Africans. Sanneh

¹¹⁸ “Tree Planting and Water Harvesting,” The Green Belt Movement, accessed August 16, 2021, <http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/what-we-do/tree-planting-for-watersheds>.

¹¹⁹ Adichie does not have a DACB profile, as the biographies on DACB typically focus only on individuals who are no longer living. However, it is not unprecedented for DACB projects to spotlight current African Christian influencers as the *Journal of African Christian Biography* has included stories of living influencers of faith.

¹²⁰ Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 10, 61, 268.

¹²¹ Maathai, *Unbowed*, 8.

emphasizes the need for greater African inclusion when speaking about Christian missions saying, “Africans not only planned, directed, and implemented missionary policy, but they also went on to observe, to research, to document, and to reflect in original ways on how to do mission in an African context.”¹²² Maathai’s writings about the positive and negative influences of missionaries in Kenya serves as an example of an African Catholic woman reflecting on the complexities in her own people’s faith history in a way that challenges the stereotypical dismissal of missionaries.

Maathai’s writings also document her personal spiritual journey and the impact of faith on her activism. *Unbowed* catalogs her various reactions to Catholicism, from being dismayed at the changes made in Vatican II to feeling especially outraged that the police arrested priests and nuns during a political protest saying, “for the government to treat the religious this way was, to me, the lowest level to which the system had sunk.”¹²³ In her 2010 book *Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual Values for Healing Ourselves and the World*, Maathai connects the environmental movement to tenets found across faiths but does not tie these values to a specific religious tradition. In fact, Maathai even explicitly denies Catholic influence on her activism saying, “it is clear to me that when I began this work in 1977, I wasn’t motivated by my faith or by my religion in general.”¹²⁴ Yet Maathai’s other writing hints at connections between her work and faith outside of general spirituality. For instance, in *Unbowed* she selects a Bible quote for the epigraph, and she credits her Catholic high school with instilling in her a sense of justice and common good.¹²⁵ Further study and close analysis of Maathai’s writing could reveal deeper connections between her Catholic faith and activism or could confirm her premise that it is general spirituality (and not a specific faith) that allowed her to enact such remarkable change. Either discovery would provide greater context into the study of Catholicism’s impact on African female activism.

Like Maathai, Adichie’s writing and speaking on her Catholicism do not present a straightforward narrative. In her 2015 article “Raised Catholic,” Adichie reflects on her journey within the Catholic faith from loving the ritual of

¹²² Lamin Sanneh, “World Christianity and the New Historiography: History and Global Interconnections,” in *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History*, ed. W.R. Shenk (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 107.

¹²³ Maathai, *Unbowed*, 82, 280.

¹²⁴ Wangari Maathai, *Replenishing the Earth* (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 13.

¹²⁵ Maathai, *Unbowed*, 70.

Mass in Nigeria as a young girl to becoming disillusioned by severe dogma and inequities between clergy and parishioners as she grew older.¹²⁶ When Adichie attended Mass after moving to the United States, she found American churches to be overly political. Yet despite her criticism of the Church throughout “Raised Catholic,” Adichie ends the article on a hopeful note by saying that she is encouraged by Pope Francis’ message of humility and compassion. Unlike Maathai, Adichie praises the changes made by Vatican II, using the council as evidence that more positive change within the Church would not be unprecedented. While Adichie’s has been a vocal critic of the Catholic Church, she does not deny the influence of faith in her life. She mentions attending service at churches of different denominations when feeling hurt by the Catholic Church, thus showing her continued spirituality even when she wished to be distanced from the Catholic Church itself. She speaks to the lasting influence of Catholicism on her life saying, “to be raised Roman Catholic is to be inducted into a culture that clings, that slides between your soul’s crevices and stays.”¹²⁷ Further signaling her connection to Catholicism despite her criticism of the Church, Adichie chose to have her daughter baptized in order to give her the option of faith.¹²⁸

Adichie addresses religion when speaking and writing about feminism. She openly acknowledges the sexism within the hierarchy of the Catholic church and, indeed, many churches. In an interview with Paul Elie, senior fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Adichie said, “I think religion ... is not a women-friendly institution.”¹²⁹ Yet she also recognizes the power of religion in reaching women and spreading her message. In a presentation at Johns Hopkins University, Adichie explained that she studies the Bible in order to better understand “religion being the problem...but also being part of the solution” of gender inequality.¹³⁰ Another way that Adichie’s feminism

¹²⁶ Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “Raised Catholic,” *The Atlantic*, October 14, 2015,

¹²⁷ Adichie, “Raised Catholic,” 3.

¹²⁸ “Award-Winning Author Adichie Explores Faith, Feminism at Georgetown Event,” Georgetown University, last modified March 17, 2017, accessed August 17, 2021, <https://www.georgetown.edu/news/award-winning-author-adichie-explores-faith-feminism-at-georgetown-event/>.

¹²⁹ “Award-Winning Author,” Georgetown University.

¹³⁰ “Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on Religion and Feminism,” video, YouTube, posted April 2017, accessed August 17, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl1MaobpMT8>.

reaches beyond academic spheres is through her fiction. Literary researcher Daria Tunca's 2013 article "The Confessions of a 'Buddhist Catholic:' Religion in the Works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie'" argues that Adichie's fiction denounces extremism and increasingly recognizes the political implications of religion. The religious messages and characters put forth in Adichie's books may offer greater insight into the author's own perspectives. As in Maathai's case, scholarly discourse around African Catholicism and activism would benefit from greater inquiries into the relationship between Adichie's faith and feminism.

Creating a lesson plan for the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography* was one of the more challenging and rewarding tasks I have taken on as a college student. I ended the project with more questions than answers. While I originally envisioned lessons that instructed, the ultimate product included more discussion and student participation than lecturing as I found myself unable to adequately summarize the dynamic figures I chose to focus on. With that being said, the research process taught me a great deal about how integrity in biographical research requires information about the whole person—including personal beliefs. Religious affiliation does not tell the whole story of one's faith, as shown both through those who have no affiliation yet maintain spirituality and those who do not fully subscribe to the beliefs of their official denomination. Wangari Maathai and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie serve as case studies of female Catholic activists whose work is informed by their faith, yet who do not fully identify with all aspects of the Catholic Church. Telling their story fully and accurately requires looking within.

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Recent Print and Digital Resources Related to Christianity in Africa

Compiled by Beth Restrick, Head, BU African Studies Library

Carney, J. J. **For God and My Country: Catholic Leadership in Modern Uganda (Studies in World Catholicism)**. Cascade Books, 2020. \$22.00 (Paperback) www.amazon.com
ISBN-10: 1532682522, ISBN-13: 978-1532682520

Description: “*For God and My Country*, [is] a book that explores how seven inspiring leaders in Uganda's largest religious community have shaped the social and political life of their country. Drawing on extensive oral research, J. J. Carney analyzes how personal faith, theological vision, and Catholic social teaching have propelled these leaders to embody Vatican II's call for the Church to be a sign of communion and unity in the world. Readers will gain rich insight into Uganda's postcolonial politics and the history of one of Africa's most important Catholic communities. Each chapter closes with leadership lessons and reflection questions, making this an ideal text for classroom and parish adoption.” (amazon.com)

Oborji, Francis Anekwe. **Towards African Missiology: Issues of New Language for African Christianity**. Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, 2020. \$23.99 (Paperback) www.barnesandnoble.com ISBN: 9781664137196

Description: “This volume reflects on a credible and a new language of Christian mission in Africa. The author's thoughts and approaches not only provide a missiological insight which contribute to the repertoire of expanding fresh ideas in the missiological studies but also serves the purpose of highlighting the active participation of Africans in the missionary mandate of Jesus Christ. In other words, the scope of missiology needs a contextualized interpretation. Thus, he proposes a proactive language for missiology in Africa thereby underlining Africans as normal and full members of the human family. In the light of the Vatican II mission theology, the new language should be based on the fact that Africans will grow and do better in admiration and not in sympathy. Interestingly, the arguments in this volume opens the space for the on-going discussions in the mission of the church in the era of secularization and post-modernity. Consequently, a new language for missiology in Africa will come from the retrieval and modernization of our African cultural matrix pursued from the

point of view of the daily struggles of the Africans themselves for survival which also addresses Africans in the spirit of cooperation.” (barnesandnoble.com)

Turaki, Yusufu. **Engaging Religions and Worldviews in Africa: A Christian Theological Method**. HippoBooks, 2020. \$17.31 (Paperback)

www.amazon.com ISBN: 9781783687596

Description: “In this in-depth study, Yusufu Turaki offers a theological framework for engaging this clash of perspectives in Africa, where traditional African religions, colonialism, and exposure to Christianity have each had a lasting impact on contemporary African worldviews. Professor Turaki undertakes a systematic analysis of the nature of African Traditional Religion, its complex history with Christianity, and the need for African Christian theology to address its cultural and historical roots effectively. He provides both a conceptual framework and practical guide for engaging African cultures and religions with compassion, understanding, and a firm foundation rooted in scriptural truth. This book is an excellent resource for students of religion and theology, as well as those interested in Africa’s traditional heritage or drawn to the important work of cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue.” (amazon.com)

Open Access – Journal Article & Theses

Ajayi, S.A. **The Place of Ogbomoso in Baptist Missionary Enterprise in Nigeria**. *OGIRISI: a New Journal of African Studies*, v. 8 (2011)

<https://www.ajol.info>

Abstract: Ogbomoso occupies a crucial place in the annals of Baptist missionary history in Nigeria. Even though it was not the very first place where Baptist work was first firmly planted in Nigeria, the town today has a richly textured and exciting history and has played a unique role in the lives of the Nigerian Baptist community. In myriads of ways, the Baptists of Ogbomoso have clearly motivated Nigerian Baptists as catalysts of social and religious change not only in Nigeria but in other parts of Africa. ... This paper is an inspiring account depicting the growth of Baptist missionary work in Ogbomoso and the vitality of its witness throughout the nooks and crannies of Nigeria and beyond. The account herein contained, is important, not just to Baptists, but to Christians of all traditions and denominations who take their ecumenical calling seriously. It gives us some insight and a deeper awareness of the place and contributions of Ogbomosho as the most potent and versatile of all Baptist communities in Nigeria.

Game, Wondimu M. **The Role of the African Church in the 21st Century Global Mission: A Case Study of the EECMY Global Mission Venture and Economic Mindset.** MA Thesis in Practical Theology. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; 2020. URL: https://scholar.csl.edu/ma_th/92/

Abstract: Jesus Christ inaugurated and commissioned his church to be a missionary until the end of the world. Thus, the church is missionary by her very nature. The modern mission paradigm was from the West to the rest. But, in this 21st century, the mission has shifted from the global North to the global South; this massive shift has anchored the global South as the heartland of Christianity and the force of mission. This mission shift also demands the paradigm shift of both global north and south. Although the African church has played a pivotal role in church history, the largest Christian continent is still a mission field for most missionary-sending churches and organizations. Its missionary endeavors and role is limited only to the continent of Africa. The thesis attempted to understand the factors which have limited the African church's mission role within the continent and impede its role for the 21st-century global mission and expected paradigm shift.

Ononiwu, Maureen Ugochi. **Gospel and Culture: Nigerian Pentecostalism as a Case Study for African Contributions to Intercultural Theology.** MA Thesis in Theology. University of Toronto, 2020. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/1807/102070>

Abstract: This study proposes Nigerian Pentecostalism as a case study on proper gospel-culture engagement. The aim is to show that insights from the faith practices of Nigerian Pentecostalism can lead to further understanding of the relationship between gospel and culture. The research implication concerns intercultural theology. Building upon past scholarship, this thesis contributes to the conversation on the subject, which aims to examine how intercultural dialogue between Western and non-Western forms of Christianity can shed insights on the relationship between gospel and culture. The study suggests that as Christianity becomes increasingly centered in the global South (and Eastern hemisphere), the global South (or non-Western) Church presents fresh insights to the Western Church as it struggles to define its identity in a secular and post-Christian context. The research illustrates ways in which Christian voices from the South; Nigerian Pentecostalism in this case, can enrich the theology and mission of post-Christian Western context.